

Ali Mahdi urges reconciliation talks

MOGADISHU (R) — Somali faction leader Ali Mahdi Mohamed on Wednesday called for U.N.-sponsored reconciliation talks to try and end the political impasse in his broken Horn of Africa country. Mr. Ali Mahdi said the world body, which has tried but failed in the past to unite rival factions in Somalia, should come in as Somalia was now ready for peace. "The U.N. should fulfil the second chance of holding a national reconciliation conference for Somalia," said Mr. Ali Mahdi, who also lays claim to the Somali presidency. "Somalis are now ready for the convening of a national reconciliation conference with the support of the United Nations," he told reporters. Mr. Ali Mahdi was speaking a day after the U.N. Security Council studied a report on Somalia compiled by Secretary-General Boutros Ghali. The report said the political situation in Somalia had been dominated by a "debilitating stalemate for almost two years," since faction leaders failed to honour an agreement to convene an all-inclusive national reconciliation conference and form a government by May 1994.

Jordan Times

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Israel demolishes West Bank homes

YATTA (R) — Israel on Wednesday began bulldozing seven Palestinian buildings in the West Bank it said were built illegally, a spokesman for the civil administration that manages part of the area said. "Today the civil administration will carry out the seven demolition orders of illegal buildings in the Yatta area which are on a main road under Israeli jurisdiction," said Second Lieutenant Peter Lerner. Palestinians said home-owners were asked to evacuate their homes just one hour before Israeli forces arrived and began wrecking them. L. Lerner said the owners were notified well in advance and had time to appeal the orders. Yatta is under Palestinian control. Israel is to leave most of the nearby town of Hebron soon, and the area where the houses were being demolished is under joint administration. Israeli troops shot and seriously wounded a Palestinian protesting on Wednesday against Israel's confiscation of West Bank land for a fence around a Jewish settlement, witnesses said. They said Nadir Abu Hamdah was taken to hospital with a gunshot wound in his head.

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Bahrain restricts overseas calls

MANAMA (AFP) — The authorities have blocked the possibility of making overseas calls from public telephone booths in Bahrain, an official said Wednesday. Asked if the measure was taken for security reasons during a new wave of political unrest in the archipelago, the official replied only: "It's for administrative reasons." The official who asked not to be named did not say how long the measure, which took effect on Tuesday, would remain in place. It was still possible, however, to make international calls from offices and homes.

Iran accuses U.S. of false charge

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran has accused the United States of helping to fabricate and distribute counterfeit Iranian notes, the official IRNA news agency said Wednesday. The Iranian permanent mission at the United Nations issued a statement Tuesday also "categorically" denying a recent report by the U.S. television network ABC implicating Iran in the fabrication of fake dollar bills. Such accusations, repeatedly made by the U.S. against Iran since 1992, "are all the more absurd as Iran is itself a victim of the circulation" of counterfeit money, it said, adding that fake 10,000 rial (\$3.3) Iranian bills had been distributed in Iran. It was the first time an Iranian official acknowledged the existence of fake notes in Iran.

Polish PM quits

WARSAW (AFP) — Polish Prime Minister Jozef Oleksy announced his resignation Wednesday after a military court said it would probe allegations he spied for Moscow. Mr. Oleksy, a former communist, announced his resignation during a televised speech. Cells for him to step down have mounted since an ally of former President Lech Walesa charged last month that Mr. Oleksy passed state secrets to Moscow through two KGB agents stationed in Warsaw in the 1980s and early 1990s. Mr. Oleksy has admitted having contacts with the men but vehemently denies having engaged in espionage.

Lifting of Serb sanctions delayed

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — U.N. sanctions specifically targeting Bosnian Serbs will not immediately be lifted, western diplomats said Wednesday. Diplomats said that consensus was reached at a meeting of the Contact Group for the former Yugoslavia comprised of representatives from Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States. Italy also participated in Wednesday's discussion. The sanctions should have been lifted automatically at the notification Tuesday night by NATO Secretary General Javier Solana that all sides had "complied with the requirement to withdraw their forces from the zones of separation." But the Security Council asked for clarifications about whether Mr. Solana, reference to the zones of separation was related to the ceasefire or the withdrawal from all occupied zones.

Fatma Rushdi dies

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian actress Fatma Rushdi, a pioneer of the Arab stage known as "the Sarah Bernhardt of the East," died in Cairo at the age of 88 on Tuesday, the daily Al Ahram reported. Rushdi, who began performing at the age of nine, worked in Egypt's greatest acting ensembles from the 1920s to 40s, including those of the early Arab theatre giants Youssef Wahbi and Nagib Al Rihani. She then became the first woman to open her own theatre troupe, alongside her actor-director husband Aziz Eid.

Syria, Israel resume peace talks at Wye

Experts join negotiations focusing on Golan security arrangements amid fresh optimism

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Israeli and Syrian diplomats and military officers resumed peace talks on Friday in Maryland near Washington on Wednesday, the State Department said.

Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said five negotiators from each side, including two Syrian and two Israeli military officers, had begun talks at a secluded conference centre at the Wye Plantation about an hour's drive from Washington. He said the talks were expected to continue through Friday and resume on Monday for a few days next week.

"The United States hopes for very serious, productive and comprehensive discussions on all the issues that are currently separating Syria and Israel," Mr. Burns said. "As Secretary (of State Warren) Christopher has said a couple of times this week, we are hoping for progress in this round of talks."

The talks, the third face-to-face encounter between Israeli and Syrian officials at the U.S. East Coast, were to set the tone for a high-profile mediation mission to the region by Mr. Christopher next month.

But Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak, who heads the Israeli delegation, sound-

ed a pessimistic note ahead of the negotiations, saying in a television interview that the exploratory talks remained riddled with hurdles and complications.

"I see obstacles on any given aspect of it," Mr. Barak told NBC television. He reiterated that Israel wanted to discuss security guarantees that would follow an eventual pullout of its troops from the Golan Heights.

That position put Israel at odds with Syria, which is demanding that talks focus on a precise timetable for the return of the Golan Heights to Syria.

"I think the most important (issues) are the security arrangements, especially the kind of arrangements against surprise attack," Mr. Barak said. "We need surprise attack to become practically impossible," he added.

The ruling Syrian newspaper Al Baath earlier this week charged Israel wanted to deal with "subjects which are not linked directly to the heart" of the conflict.

Further complicating the peace initiative was discussion in Israel about early elections, a prospect that U.S. officials fear could considerably tone down Israel's resolve to seek a peace agree-

ment with Syria this year. Israeli elections are set for Oct. 29 but are expected to be brought forward to June 4 as polls show Prime Minister Shimon Peres could win victory.

Spokesman Burns said Tuesday that U.S. officials "assume that past a certain point this year, it will be difficult, because of the (Israeli and American) elections, to maintain a normal set of negotiations. That's why we hope for progress ... beginning right now."

The United States "will not force either side into a deal. If there is going to be an agreement, it's because Syria and Israel want there to be an agreement. And we will just try to help along the way."

The U.S. administration is hoping to add a peace agreement between Israel and Syria to its list of diplomatic successes that have included Bosnia and Haiti as President Bill Clinton vies for reelection in November.

The peace talks were set against the backdrop of what is widely viewed as an ambitious Israeli agenda for peace with Syria, which, along with Lebanon, could lead to a comprehensive peace in the Middle East for the first time

(Continued on page 12)

Arafat, Peres disagree on Palestinian independence

EREZ CROSSING (Agencies) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres disagreed over the creation of a Palestinian state at talks here Wednesday, their first since self-rule elections.

Mr. Arafat said, "I hope we will have this independent state very soon," commenting that it was "my right to dream and to think."

But Mr. Peres retorted: "The difference between a dream and an agreement is that a dream can be one-sided. For an agreement you need two sides."

Negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian territories are scheduled to begin in May.

Mr. Arafat told the joint news conference: "Every side has the right to put his dreams and thoughts on the table."

Enjoying a new legitimacy since his overwhelming election Saturday as the first Palestinian president, Mr. Arafat had predicted before the meeting that an independent Palestinian state could be created within a year to 18 months.

He also said that the self-rule elections showed that the

Palestinians are "looking strongly to strengthen more and more the peace process."

"They were not only voting for us as a person but they were voting for the peace process," Mr. Arafat said.

In a sign of improving relations, Mr. Peres said that Israel would allow 3,000 more Palestinians from the Hebron area on the West Bank to work within its territory.

"We have raised the number of permits for workers to come from Gaza and West Bank," he said. "We have learned that Arabs and Jews can live together."

Mr. Peres also congratulated Mr. Arafat on his "great success" by being elected with such a large majority.

"The great majority of the Palestinians support the peace and the peace process," the Israeli prime minister said. "It was a real verdict of peace on the Palestinian side."

Mr. Arafat campaigned for election promising Palestinian voters he would lead them to independence. In Saturday's polls, Palestinians also chose an 88-member legislative council dominated by

Mr. Arafat's Fatah movement.

Mr. Arafat said the final status negotiations "will begin very soon" and did not need to wait for a May deadline set out in Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements.

He said informal discussions had in fact already begun with Israel on the agenda for the final status talks. "There are contacts with the Israelis to establish an agenda which will notably include the question of Jerusalem, refugees, Jewish settlements and borders," he said.

Mr. Peres has never officially admitted the principle of Palestinian independence, although Environment Minister Yossi Sarid said this week that Saturday's elections had created "a de facto Palestinian state."

Mr. Peres insists that final-status talks can begin only once the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) removes clauses in its charter referring to the destruction of Israel.

"The Palestinian (National) Authority must cancel this charter without wavering as it

(Continued on page 12)

King Hussein hosts iftar

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday hosted an iftar at the Sports City in honour of members of both Houses of Parliament, Cabinet members, senior government officials, representatives of the media, the mayor of Amman, heads of professional associations, secretaries of political parties, Christian and Muslim clergymen, writers and heads of diplomatic missions.

Attending the banquet with the King were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem, His Royal Highness Prince



Ghazi Ben Mohammad and the King's advisors. Before the banquet the

King and the guests attended the evening prayers and exchanged

good wishes on the occasion of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Iraq wants oil talks away from U.S.

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq would like its talks with the United Nations on selling limited amounts of oil to be held outside the United States, diplomats in Baghdad said on Wednesday.

They said Iraq wanted the talks conducted away from the clamour of international media and direct U.S. supervision.

"They are for Geneva or any other place outside America and Britain. They have made that clear to the U.N. secretary-general but have also said it was not a condition for the talks to start," said one diplomat.

He said Iraq was still suspicious of both Washington and London and feared they would try to torpedo the talks and blame the Iraqi government for the suffering of its population.

"But this does not mean that they would not go if the secretary-general asked them

to come to New York," he said.

Iraq's team was waiting word from Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, who had worked hard to persuade Baghdad to come to the negotiating table.

Iraq has accepted a U.N. invitation to enter talks on an offer that would allow it oil sales worth \$2 billion over six months to pay for urgent humanitarian needs for its sanctions-hit people.

The diplomats said both Iraq's oil and foreign affairs ministries were preparing themselves for a new stage in which Baghdad was trying to re-establish itself as a force in international oil markets.

"There is optimism everywhere from the ordinary person on the streets of Baghdad to the highest echelons in the leadership," another diplomat said.

But he added that some

circles in Iraq were still treating the subject with cautious optimism.

Another diplomat said Iraqis were also relying on Egypt in addition to France and Russia for a favourable hearing of some of their demands.

The news on the possible talks has hit the value of the U.S. dollar in Iraq. On Wednesday it dipped to 1,000 to the dinar from 3,000 earlier this month, forcing down prices in Baghdad's markets.

another seven years in power with 99.96 per cent of the vote.

The elections, the first since April 1989, will not involve Kurdish-administered northern Iraq, where four million of Iraq's 18 million inhabitants live, according to a decree issued by Hussein.

He said he had decided to "postpone the elections in the autonomous region of Kurdistan until a return to normal" in the north, which has been controlled by Iraqi Kurds in defiance of Baghdad since the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf war.

The poll will be supervised by Ezzat Ibrahim, the vice chairman of Iraq's highest ruling body, the Revolutionary Command Council.

All Iraqis aged 18 and over are eligible to vote. Candidates must be at least 25 years old.

Heated exchanges, resignation in House

By Tareq Momani

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Wednesday's session of the Lower House of Parliament was characterised by hot outbursts, tense debates and fiery exchanges of accusations.

Apart from the unprecedented exchange of accusations between Deputy Toujan Faisal and the government (see separate story), the session witnessed a heated discussion between House Speaker Saad Hayel Srour and Islamist Deputy Abdul Munem Abu Zant as well as the resignation of the chairman and several members of the House's Law Committee.

Mr. Srour fiercely shielded himself against accusations of unfair treatment of fellow deputies levelled by Sheikh Abu Zant.

"We never knew you acting as an umbrella for injustice, and I only intend — through these words — to protect you from the torment of hell," said Sheikh Abu Zant, following a discussion of Article 104 of the House's bylaw which empowers the speaker to interrupt and stop speakers under the dome in specified cases.

Mr. Srour replied to Mr. Abu Zant: "You cannot appoint yourself as the one who protects people from or sends them to hell. This is only done by God."

"None of us should claim monopolising wisdom; We too know the Holy Koran and know religion too well," Mr. Srour said.

Also on Wednesday, the chairman of the Law Committee and several of its members said they were resigning after differences in views among them over one of the committee's recent decisions surfaced during House discussions.

Deputies Abdul Baqi Jammo and Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh — who is also

deputy prime minister and education minister — said they were quitting the committee because of the inconsistency in the positions of some of the committee's members.

The committee's chairman, Abdul Karim Dughmi, announced then that he was resigning for the same reason, saying: "I see that the committee's decisions have no committee members to support them under the dome. I really wonder why some of the members support such decisions in the committee meetings and then change their minds under the dome."

I declare that I am resigning as chairman and member in the committee and declare that I will never join it."

Mr. Srour intervened in an attempt to calm things down, urging the committee members to meet and to agree not to oppose committee decisions during floor debates.

While at the office of the House's speaker, Ms. Faisal threatened to "expose" the government in the foreign media. We strongly condemn such behaviour coming from a people's deputy who is supposed to protect the national interests," added Mr. Rawabdeh.

"Our silence vis-a-vis personally offensive remarks

conducted by their superiors."

"For levelling false accusations at the government, Ms. Faisal will be sued in court and the customs officers reserve the right to demand an apology," said the minister.

"Ms. Faisal levelled threats against the customs director and he demanded from the House members help put an end to such excesses," he added.

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The House also heard proposals by several deputies and replies by ministers to deputies' queries.

Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabarti said Jordan did not deport Iranian diplomat Saeed Al Batini but had declared him persona non grata.

Replying to a question by Islamist Deputy Theeb Abdullah, Mr. Kabarti said the incident "does not contravene Jordan's sincere desire to have excellent relations with all countries of the world, including Islamic ones, on the basis of mutual respect."

Deputy Abdullah countered by saying that Mr. Batini's tenure in Jordan had ended and he was about to leave without being asked.

"He could have left without having all that commotion that undermines relations with Islamic countries, including Iran," said Mr. Abdullah.

Toujan Faisal, government in tussle over video camera

By Tareq Momani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Wednesday's Lower House of Parliament session witnessed a heated debate between the government and Deputy Toujan Faisal over an incident at the Queen Alia International Airport where customs officers were said to have asked Ms. Faisal to comply with regulations and pay for the video camera that was found in her luggage upon her arrival from a trip to the United States.

Ms. Faisal, who maintained that the camera had been with her before she left Jordan, accused the government during the session of being "smugglers."

"Those who conduct smuggling are members of the government and the prime

minister..." she asserted.

"I also accuse the finance minister, Mr. Basel Jaraneh, of colluding in fabricating a smuggling charge against me, a people's deputy," said Ms. Faisal.

In reply, Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh said: "Ms. Faisal claims that the government was trying to fabricate a smuggling charge against her but the government by no means resorts to such practices."

"Is it reasonable for any one to fabricate charges against people and confine the charge to a mere case of asking them to pay customs duty? I will leave this matter and the question of fabricating charges to the common sense of the House members," said Mr. Rawabdeh.

According to the govern-

ment version, airport customs officers X-rayed Ms. Faisal's luggage as a normal procedure and discovered the video camera.

The officials promptly closed the suitcase and asked for its owner to account for the camera. Ms. Faisal told the officials that the camera was with her all the time since she left Amman for the U.S. and was not being introduced into the country.

Ms. Faisal claimed during Wednesday's session that the customs officers had opened the suitcase and stolen from it a golden necklace and a ring before reaching the luggage ramp.

"This happened in my absence, and then they called for me and said that I should pay customs duty for the camera and that otherwise it would be considered smuggled merchandise,"

Mr. Rawabdeh countered: "Our refraining from replying to the slanderous charges was not of weakness or cowardice, but rather in true commitment to Arab and Islamic ethics and our respect for the council and the Jordanian people and our belief in democracy. But we will refer the matter to the law which will be the judge."

"Ms. Faisal was accorded the normal procedures and was admitted to the VIP lounge while a driver was following up the luggage procedures with the customs officers," he said.

"After the camera was found, the customs officer in charge called Ms. Faisal to the counter, but Ms. Faisal started yelling at the officers, calling them smugglers, and facilitating 'smuggling' opera-

tions conducted by their superiors."

"For levelling false accusations at the government, Ms. Faisal will be sued in court and the customs officers reserve the right to demand an apology," said the minister.

"Ms. Faisal levelled threats against the customs director and he demanded from the House members help put an end to such excesses," he added.

"While at the office of the House's speaker, Ms. Faisal threatened to 'expose' the government in the foreign media. We strongly condemn such behaviour coming from a people's deputy who is supposed to protect the national interests," added Mr. Rawabdeh.

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Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh



Toujan Faisal

Addressing the House later, Ms. Faisal demanded an official apology for what she said was the damage caused to her and she cursed the government, levelled accusations against the government,

Hamass assaults election, but its options limited

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The Islamic movement Hamas accused Yasser Arafat Wednesday of widespread fraud in last weekend's Palestinian elections, but leading militants admitted they have to adjust to the "new reality" created by the polls.

Hamas threatened with marginalisation by its boycott of Saturday's polls which failed miserably, accused Mr. Arafat and his Palestinian National Authority (PNA) "of interfering in the whole election process."

In a statement distributed in the Palestinian territories, Hamas said supporters of Mr. Arafat and his Fateh movement had waged a campaign of "harassing independent candidates, arresting some candidates and terrorising people... to vote for specific candidates."

Mr. Arafat was elected president with more than 88 per cent of the vote while Fateh members and allies won more than 75 per cent of the 88 council seats.

"We still reject Oslo and all it leads to and stress our commitment to resistance against occupation," said the Hamas statement, referring to the autonomy agreement reached in the Norwegian capital between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Hamas, the acronym of the Islamic Resistance Movement, has killed scores of Israelis in suicide bombings and other attacks designed to undermine the Oslo agreements.

It joined other Islamic and left-wing "rejectionist" groups in announcing an official boycott of the elections.

But at the same time Hamas took its precautions, allowing some militants to run in the polls as "Islamic independents" — five of whom won council seats.

And despite the militant tone of Wednesday's statement, Hamas made clear that the council cannot be ignored, addressing a message to the council, if it wants to get Hamas' support and the people's support, to reject the Oslo agreements and work to scupper them.

"The elections will leave their effect on everybody," said Jamil Hamami, a leading Hamas militant on the West Bank.

"We will continue to par-

ticipate in building a homeland and a state," he said. "However, we must also adjust to the new reality created by the elections," he said, adding, "I believe the Islamic movement is dynamic enough to cope with the new situation."

Hamas officials said their next priority will be preparing for municipal polls expected to be held in the Palestinian territories before this summer.

The movement is firmly implanted in many communities, where it runs a network of community and social organisations alongside its religious schools, and is hoping to do well in the local vote.

Hamas members had a respectable showing for example in chamber of commerce elections held in 1992, winning seats in the West Bank towns of Hebron and Ramallah.

An exit poll conducted Saturday by the Independent Centre for Palestine Research and Studies said Hamas supporters represented seven per cent of the voters. It estimates total Hamas support at about 15 per cent of the population on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The major question mark hanging over the future of Hamas is whether it will resume its campaign of anti-Israeli attacks.

Hamas leaders vowed to avenge the Jan. 5 assassination by presumed Israeli agents of Yahya Ayyash, mastermind of the earlier suicide bombing campaign. And Israeli experts say they expect the movement to follow through with the threat in some form.

But other analysts, including Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, play down the danger, stressing that the main victims of any renewed attacks would be the peace process and Mr. Arafat's own fledgling new government.

Mr. Peres expressed confidence Monday that Mr. Arafat's security forces have been and can continue to control extremists on their territory.

And Mr. Hamami indicated that the potential dangers of attacks to the Palestinians' own interests are understood by some Hamas elements as well.

"Such a situation must be dealt with without tension,"

Sudan to hold elections in March

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan is to hold presidential and parliamentary elections in the first two weeks of March, the Sudanese electoral commission announced Tuesday.

Commission Chairman Abdul Monim Al Zein Al Nahas made the announcement and gave details of the electoral timetable at a hastily arranged news conference here after talks with representatives of the country's 26 regions.

Sudan's current president is General Omar Hassan Al Bashir, who came to power in a military coup against the then-civilian government in 1989.

He said the process would start on Feb. 1 when electoral rolls would be available for scrutiny in the country's 275 constituencies until February 10.

Nominations for the presidency and parliament would be made between Feb. 3 and 10. Preliminary lists of those standing would be posted, objections heard and candidates withdrawn if necessary before a final list would be published on February 15.

The electoral campaign itself would run over the next two weeks, Mr. Nahas said, adding that it provided "ample" time for voters to get to know their candidates.

Voting for the presidency and parliament would then take place between March 1 and 12, he added. Votes would be counted over the next two days and the final results announced by the commission on March 15.

The results of the elections will be declared only after endorsement by the commission because they are national elections," he said. Constituency boundaries had already been drawn up, except for one region in southern Sudan, Mr. Nahas added.

He said government officials in each region had been told to form committees in the constituencies by Jan. 31, which would include representatives of the administrative, legal and military authorities.

Finally, he said the registration of all electors would be complete in all regions of southern Sudan by the time the elections began.

The mainly Christian and animist south of Sudan is in the grip of a 12-year civil war

Egyptian Brotherhood leader sees globalised Islamic state in 30 years

CAIRO (Agencies) — The newly chosen leader of Egypt's influential Muslim Brotherhood predicted his group would establish an Islamic mega-state within the next 30 years.

"The goal of the Brotherhood is simple," the group's supreme guide Mostafa Mashour was quoted on Wednesday as saying in an interview with the London-based Al Hayat daily.

"We are working for the establishment of an international Islamic state before a century has passed since the group was set up 70 years ago," he added. He did not say how large he envisaged the state would be.

Mr. Mashour, who was appointed as the organisation's leader last Saturday after the death of Mohammed Hamed Abu Al Nasr, is said

to have strong ties with the Brotherhood's expatriate members.

Unlike other opposition groups in Egypt, the illegal Brotherhood is seeking to establish a strict Islamic state through political and not violent means.

Analysts say it is the biggest challenge to the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) of President Hosni Mubarak.

Mr. Mashour reiterated the group's peaceful stance, insisting it would not take up arms against the state.

"We will not let any chance (to gain power) pass us by but at the same time we will not break the law or resort to violence," he said. "If the government insists on flaring things up we will face that with patience and fortitude."

The Egyptian authorities

have cracked down hard on the popular group, jailing its leaders and linking it to the Gamaa Al Islamiyah, which is trying to topple Mr. Mubarak.

More than 900 people have been killed and hundreds injured since the Gamaa began its campaign of violence in 1992.

Mr. Mashour told Al Hayat the 30-year timeframe was not unrealistic, since "communism fell after only about 70 years and the Zionist enemy has been trying to establish a state for almost a century and still does not feel settled."

Mr. Mashour, chosen the fifth "supreme guide" of the Brotherhood after his predecessor's death, repeated calls for a "dialogue" with the state to "try to put an end to the crisis."

U.N. releases special issue of 'World Media Handbook'

NEW YORK (U.N.) — The United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) is launching its 1995 directory of selected media and related data covering more than 180 countries. In some 350 pages the publication, entitled World Media Handbook, integrates a wealth of data not available from any other single source.

The handbook sets out in a concise format demographic data and communication statistics, and provides a list of more than 1,300 daily newspapers, 1,900 magazines and other periodicals, 250 news agencies, some 1,200 broadcasting organisations, 400 journalists' associations, as well as more than 300 educational institutions teaching communications. Each entry provides the names of leading editorial personnel; mailing addresses; telephone and fax numbers; circulation figures and frequency of publication.

The media entries contained in the handbook were drawn from various international directories and other sources, and verified locally during the second half of 1994 by the world-wide network of United Nations Information Centres and Services, as well as by the country offices of the United Nations Development Program-

me. As a special commemorative issue of the United Nations 50th anniversary, the 1995 edition contains a new section entitled "Membership Brief." This section outlines each country's participation in the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as in the boards and councils of particular organs and specialised agencies through which the United Nations system contributes to media development and the enhancement of international communication.

In a foreword to the handbook, Secretary-General Boutros Ghali points out that the 50 years of the organisation's existence have been marked by "a sweeping democratisation of the world order," which was manifest in the strength of the United Nations membership and the character of government in member states. "Equally vivid," he adds, "has been the growth and expansion of democracy's truest protector and ally — vigilant, responsible and compassionate media."

United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information, Samir Sanbar, in a preface to the publication, states that the new edition will be helpful to those whose daily work depends on their ability to reach multicultural audiences through the mass media, and to those who deal with communications and international affairs, whether as practitioners, students or researchers. Originally conceived as a reference tool for information professionals within the United Nations system, the World Media Handbook has acquired a major following among media practitioners, journalism and mass communication scholars, public affairs officers and representatives of non-governmental organisations world-wide. The first edition of the handbook was selected for inclusion in the 1990 Notable Documents List of the American Library Association, which commended the United Nations for its concern for quality of communication between agencies and their constituencies. Its second edition was awarded an Honorable Mention in the 1993 competition for the Prize for Excellence in Information Services by the International Communication Association's Council of Communication Libraries.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Navy chief becomes new Suez Canal chairman

CAIRO (AFP) — President Hosni Mubarak on Tuesday appointed the head of Egypt's navy as the new chairman of the Suez Canal Authority. General Ahmad Ali Fadel, 59, was appointed by presidential decree to head the Suez Canal Authority, taking over from outgoing chairman Ezzat Adel, the official agency MENA said. Gen. Fadel's replacement as head of the naval forces, which he led since 1990, was named as Gen. Ahmad Sabr Selim, 55. Gen. Fadel becomes the fifth head of the Suez Canal since it was nationalised in 1956. Revenues from the canal of \$1.9 billion annually from one of the country's largest sources of foreign currency, also boosted by oil and tourism receipts, as well as funds transferred by expatriates.

Cyprus demands U.S. missile guarantees

NICOSIA (AFP) — Cyprus on Tuesday demanded "specific provisions" by the United States to ensure that 120 long-range missiles it plans to sell to Turkey are not used against the divided island. Government spokesman Yiannakis Cassoulides said these provisions should be included in the contract of sale. "We consider the U.S. government responsible for these missiles and it should guarantee that they will not be used to Cyprus' expense," he told the Cyprus News Agency. Washington announced in December that it planned to sell Ankara 120 ATAC-MS missiles with a 165-kilometre range, provoking an angry reaction from Cyprus, the northern third of which was invaded by Turkish mainland troops in 1974. The northern coastline lies just 60 kilometres from Turkey. Mr. Cassoulides said verbal guarantees by Washington were not enough and since the United States was "determined to sell them, the contracts they will sign with the Turks should have specific provisions on this issue."

Cyprus police arrest two for arms theft

NICOSIA (R) — Cyprus police on Tuesday said they have arrested two men on suspicion of stealing anti-tank missiles and grenades from a military warehouse. Police in the southern port of Larnaca said they arrested two Greek Cypriot men from the village of Aradippou pending enquiries into the theft of 78 grenades and three anti-tank missiles which disappeared from an army depot in the area 10 days ago. A day after the theft was discovered police found the weapons, with one grenade missing, in a suitcase buried in a field in the Aradippou district.

Qadhafi meets Nation of Islam leader

LONDON (AFP) — Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan had talks in Tripoli Tuesday with Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi about the situation of Muslims in the United States. Libyan television reported. They discussed "the situation of Muslims in the United States and the means which would unify, mobilise and organise them in their own establishments so as to have a say and effective role in the next U.S. elections," according to the broadcast monitored here by the BBC late Tuesday. The two "stressed the need to work to support all the weak and oppressed in the United States, to end the life of misery they are leading, and to stop the oppression being practised against them by the exploitative capitalist circles which receive unlimited support from the ruling circles in the United States," the television said. The visit by the hardline U.S. black rights activist came the day after the United States extended a 10-year-old embargo that bans trade with Libya and freezes Libyan assets in the United States. "The policies and actions of the government of Libya continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States," President Bill Clinton said in a report to Congress.

Turk held for sex with 13-year-old 'wife'

KAHRAMANMARAS, Turkey (R) — An 18-year-old unemployed Turkish waiter was arrested on Tuesday for statutory rape of a 13-year-old British girl whom he married in a Muslim ceremony with her parents' consent, officials said.

"He has been arrested for having sex with an underage girl," the chief public prosecutor of the southern town of Kahramanmaraş told Reuters.

"The girl and the boy were questioned by a prosecutor because of the girl's youth, and she was sent to take a virginity test, which she failed," he said.

Private Turkish ATV television showed the girl, Sarah Cook, wearing the traditional Muslim headscarf, looking at the floor as a hospital doctor told reporters that she was not a virgin.

"We are very happy," she

told reporters before quickly leaving with her husband's relatives.

Sarah married 18-year-old Musa Komegac, whom she met on holiday on the Turkish coast last year, in a Muslim ceremony two weeks ago.

The religious wedding ceremony is not officially recognised in Turkey but couples are free to have it performed.

The lower age limit for the marriage of girls in Turkey is 15, as long as there is parental consent, but legal officials say this can be lowered with a doctor's report deeming the girl physically fit for marriage, again pending parental consent.

Occasionally Turkish girls, usually from conservative backgrounds, are required by their parents to take virginity tests if they are thought to have had under-age sex.

"We are going to charge Komegac, and this could result in some years in jail but on the other hand we know that the so-called marriage took place with the parents' consent," the chief prosecutor said.

A police official in Kahramanmaraş, a conservative town near the Syrian border, said the girl's family was expected to fly to Turkey on Wednesday.

"I expect they will tell the prosecutor that they gave their consent to the marriage — this seems to be the case as we have wedding pictures here and other documents indicating she married of her own free will and with consent," he told Reuters.

"My guess is they will tell the prosecutors that they allowed the marriage and that will be that — these poor kids have been harassed enough," he said.

By G.H. Jansen

Lot of wheeling and dealing went into Palestinian polls

EAST JERUSALEM — Were the historic first ever Palestinian elections, both for a ruling Council and a ruling president, free and fair?

A very prominent leader associated with the international monitoring of these elections has said that they were indeed free and fair. Yet it was actually not so, despite the fact that this must have been the most heavily and closely watched elections in the history of democracy. There were perhaps 1,000 observers in all from at least 32 countries and foreign organisations.

Among the latter were such incongruous and hypocritical suppliers of observers as the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the Organisation of African Unity whose members are not noted for their practice of democracy. The former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who headed his own international observer corps, tried to deal

with a query on how persons from non-democratic countries could observe a democratic procedure by saying that perhaps such observers from countries like Egypt, which he named, could learn something about democracy by taking part in this exercise.

He also dealt with a more fundamental objection to the international observer system: which is, how outside observers, without knowing the local language or local customs and traditions, could know if the voting was being "fixed" and bribery and corruption being practiced. He said that at least his particular organisation sent observers to visit the country where elections were to be held long before the polls took place so as to familiarise themselves with local conditions. Which would be a very good thing. Except for the fact that most of the observers who watched these elections arrived here only a few days before the

vote and were therefore quite ignorant of what was going on, why the election was being held and what it meant.

Particularly so because the Palestinian society in Gaza and the West Bank is a small, close tight society built around families and clans and regional and religious loyalties in which the doing of favour and the exercise and acceptance of influence ("wasta" in Arabic) was and is standard behaviour.

Opinion

And innocent and ignorant foreign observer would not have the slightest idea of what was going on, even if it was going on under their very noses. Where international observers are useful is when, by their very presence, they stop violence and open intimidation of which there was very little in these elections. But local Palestinians are convinced and take for granted the fact that there

was "fixing" and "arranging" of the results well before the poll took place. Mr. Arafat is a past master in this sort of manipulation and had ample means to do so by, for instance, promising jobs and granting permits for business or building or travel abroad or granting foreign currency and so on and so forth.

And whatever deals Mr. Arafat made, he made in private and weeks before the actual election. Some commentators noted that persons chosen to be local election observers were given jobs in the local administration which made them subject to pressure and influence. In the days just before the polling when Mr. Arafat decided that he wanted a convincing victory of around 75 per cent, not an unconvincing one of 90 or 95 per cent, it was known that he was using his influence to get people to vote for his rival in the presidential election. Though, in the event, he got only eight per cent to his 88 per cent;

the "fixing" did not take place, evidently because Arafat and his candidates secured a landslide victory.

Thanks to the widespread and obvious presence of the foreign observers in their distinctive blue jackets the actual polling process was free and fair, though in several polling stations arrangements were not made to protect the secrecy of the ballot. But after the polling was over and the observers had departed, the counting and tabulation of the votes took 48 long hours with reports of ballot boxes going "missing" for an entire day and then mysteriously being "found," standard practice for dishonest, "fixed" elections.

One very well informed Palestinian commentator had said that on a scale of ten the free and fair element in these elections could be put at six and a half to seven. Which is an over-generous estimate. It would be more realistic to fix the free and fair element at four to five.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

13:00 Fireman Sam
13:30 The Legend of Treasure Islands
13:45 My Secret Identity
14:00 NBA
15:05 The New Leave it to Beaver
15:30 Doc — Adventures of the Old West
16:30 Gillette World Sport Special
17:00 Sophie Er'Virginie
17:30 Varieties — Le Monde Est A Vous
19:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine — Archimede
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Carol and Company
20:00 Doc — Magazine 01
20:15 The Album Show
21:10 Dreama — Miami Vice (Ep. 1)
22:00 News in English
22:25 Feature film: "North Beach and Raw Hide"
23:59 Series — Matlock

PRAYER TIMES

05:09 Fair
06:29 (Sunrise) Doha
11:48 Dhuhr
14:42 'Asr
17:06 Maghrib
18:26 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Saidieh, Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623428
Anglican Church Tel. 652326
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
Gospel-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Sunny weather conditions will prevail with temperatures rising

slightly and winds becoming southerly moderate. On Friday temperatures are expected to rise further.

In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman 3/11
Aqaba 8/20
Dacra 1/19
Jordan Valley 8/20

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 8 Aqaba 17. Humidity readings: Amman 75 per cent. Aqaba 35 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Bilal Al Sayid 890280
Dr. Khalil Al Taday 777797
Dr. Osama Hussein 847289
Dr. Mohammad Al Izzah 752971
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 782636
Al Adana pharmacy 670353
Nairoh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsan pharmacy 637660
Nairoh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IBRID:
Dr. Ahmad Qura 281741
Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Yousef Abu Sa'ad 989000
Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence: Immediate 6424112
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 32111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 628900
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repair 623101
Abdali Telephone Repair 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680101
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636361
RJ Flight Information 08-53300
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53300

HOSPITALS

Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn 6424112
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine Shamsan 607071
Shamsan Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musader Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Asirah 775112/6
Army, Shamsan 891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 607155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)727275
Ibn Al Nafles Hospital (02)247100
AQAHA
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
04:00 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
07:15 Dhahran (RJ)
09:00 Agaba (RJ)
09:20 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:45 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:50 Colombo (RJ)
16:25 London (RJ)
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:05 Cairo (add) (RJ)
17:25 Casablanca (RJ)
17:35 Moscow (RJ)
18:25 Athens (RJ)
19:10 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
19:15 Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)
19:35 Rome (RJ)
20:55 Tunis (RJ)

23:59 Jeddah (RJ)
00:15 Larnaca (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

12:40 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
12:40 Sharjah (AH)
13:40 Riyadh (SV)
14:00 Doha (O7)
16:10 Doha (EK)
19:00 Paris, Damascus (AF)
20:10 Beirut (ME)
20:20 Cairo (MS)
23:10 Istanbul (TK)
01:15 London (RJ)
01:20 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
04:00 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
07:15 Dhahran (RJ)
09:00 Agaba (RJ)
09:20 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:45 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:50 Colombo (RJ)
16:25 London (RJ)
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:05 Cairo (add) (RJ)
17:25 Casablanca (RJ)
17:35 Moscow (RJ)
18:25 Athens (RJ)
19:10 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
19:15 Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)
19:35 Rome (RJ)
20:55 Tunis (RJ)

21:00 Abu Dhabi, Jakarta (RJ)
22:00 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)
22:30 Jeddah (RJ)

KUWAIT RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700/500
Banana 500/500
Banana (Mukammal) 500/500
Banana (imported) 800/700
Cabbage 80/50
Carrot 180/100
Cauliflower 180/100
Cucumbers (large) 300/200
Cucumbers (small) 550/400
Eggplant 200/120
Garlic 900/750
Grape Fruit 220/150
Lemon 370/250
Marrow (large) 100/50
Marrow (small) 180/100
Onion (green) 180/100
Onion (dry) 220/150
Orange 380/450
Pepper (hot) 600/450
Pepper (sweet) 600/450
Potato 250/180
Radish 180/100
String Beans 650/500
Spinach 140/80
Tomato 130/80



FIRST DISTRIBUTION: HRH Princess Basma Wednesday launches the first distribution of aid as part of the annual charity campaign sponsored by the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development during the holy month of Ramadan. Seen above in Mafrqa Governorate where she supervised the distribution of in-kind and medical assistance to 200 needy families from Rweibed and Hamra settlements, the Princess said the campaign is now in its sixth year and is raising donations for the needy in a show of solidarity with the poor families of Jordan in the religious spirit that is Ramadan. The charity drive started last Sunday, the first day of the holy month of fasting (Petra photo)

'Parental ignorance, overprotection can hinder'

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Itaf, a 16-year-old blind student is still in her seventh grade because her father decided to take her out of school for four years. This year Itaf went back to a boarding school because the number of her family members increased leaving no place for her to sleep.

According to the headmaster for the Islamic School for the Blind, Bahi'a Hamdan, Itaf's case is only one of many she had encountered.

Ms. Hamdan complained of family attitude. Some blind children are neglected by members of their families, many of the blind girls are not sent to school, and those who are sent are forgotten at the boarding schools, she said.

When a father decides to stop a child from going to school, said Ms. Hamdan, "we have no authority to force him not to do so."

According to the Secretary of the Friendship Association For the Blind, the number of blind Jordanians is not known, but it is estimated to be around per cent two of the ten per cent of disabled in the Kingdom. Ali Odeh told the Jordan Times that blind children below the age of 16 are not all registered because parents do not report on these

cases to the concerned authorities

Ms. Hamdan also complained that many of her students were not welcomed during the weekend by their families homes. During mid-term holidays the schools forces the families to take back their children. Many families do not even visit their children at school. "Such experience reflects badly on the child's psychology," said Ms. Hamdan.

Ms. Hamdan, herself blind, said that some parents do not consider a blind child as a member of the family. "They are ashamed of him/her," she said.

Ms. Hamdan's view was shared by the headmaster of the Noor School for the Blind, Wail Massud, who told the Jordan Times that a blind child is not on par with his/her siblings.

"Some parents take the children during school hours and might not send them back for a whole week," Dr. Massud said. "The fathers excuse, is that they are too busy to drop the child back."

Mr. Massud said he believes that families behave that way because they are disinterested in educating a blind child as their "expectation of a blind child is too little."

According to Mr. Odeh, blind people are only employed as Mosque

imam, telephone operators, woolen work and those who have good qualification, including a university degree are rarely employed.

Some children are better off at boarding schools than with their families said Fatima Abdul Rahman, a teacher at the Islamic School for the Blind. Ms. Abdul Rahman added that most of her students come from underprivileged families, and "at least" at the school they have a bed to sleep on.

Jordan has two schools for the blind, the Islamic School for the Blind and the Noor School, sponsored by the General Union for Voluntary Societies and the Ministry of social development respectively. The two take care of 145 blind children between seven and 16, the low figure could be attributed to the fact that the two schools are located in Amman.

Not many families would send their children to boarding schools outside their district said Ms. Hamdan, the reason she added is because these families are either "overprotective or ignorant."

Although education until the tenth grade is compulsory in Jordan, the law is not implemented, leaving a large number of blind children without education.

Psychiatrist Ali Kamal dies at 75

AMMAN (J.T.) — Ali Kamal, author, specialist and consultant on neurology and psychiatry at Jordan University, passed away at the age of 75 on Tuesday.

Dr. Kamal was born in Anabta, West Bank, where he lived for 18 years.

He studied at the American University in Beirut (AUB) and the University of London.

He lived in Iraq most of his life where he practised psychiatry and taught at the University of Baghdad, until he decided to settle down in Jordan six years ago.

According to Midhat Abdel Malek a dermatologist and one of Dr. Kamal's closest friends, the doctor had good contacts in Iraq and served as a special psychiatrist for Ahmad Hassan Al Bakr, Iraq's former president.

Dr. Abdel Malek said that Dr. Kamal spent half of his working days in Jordan writing, books and included women in most

of his writings.

Titles of some of his published works are: Books on Psychology, Sex and Psychology, Dreams, The Mind's Closed Doors, and Schizophrenia which was his last book.

Dr. Abdel Malek described Dr. Kamal as a "humorous" person who was interested in politics and poetry.

He added that the doctor praised his homeland, Palestine, in his poetry.

Dr. Kamal was a member at the Psychological Health Experts Association and was also a fellow at the British Royal Society of Psychiatrists.

Dr. Kamal's wife Jenny died of heart failure three weeks ago, and according to Dr. Abdel Malek, the doctor was so heart-broken that he was going to die soon after her.

Dr. Kamal is survived by a son and four daughters.

He died of cardiac arrest.

JEA, German firm sign contract for power transformer installations

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) Wednesday signed a contract with the German firm AEG for the installation of transformers at the main electricity station south of Amman and reactors at the Aqaba power station to boost electric power from 132 kilo volts to 400 kilo volts.

The entire project will cost about \$10 million, of which nearly \$9 will be financed by the Arab Fund

for Social and Economic Development in the form of a loan and the rest by the JEA, according to JEA Director General Mohammad Saeed Arafah.

Mr. Arafah said the project is expected to be completed in the second half of 1997.

Mr. Arafah and AEG General Manager for Projects Grigor Steiner signed the deal at the JEA head office in Amman.

Jordan signs cultural accords with Oman, Mauritania

AMMAN (Petra) — Oman and Jordan Wednesday signed an executive programme for the implementation of their cultural and scientific agreement extending from 1996 to 1998.

Under the terms of the agreement, signed by Ministry of Planning Secretary General Nabil Ammari and Omani Ambassador to Jordan Mohammad Al Busaeed, the two countries pledge to cooperate in the fields of education, higher education, culture, social development, sports, youth and antiquities.

In the education and higher education fields, the two states will organise training courses for personnel, exchange textbooks and publications dealing with school syllabuses, and assign university seats for students to be granted scholarships.

In the area of culture, the two sides will exchange publications, periodicals

and other material dealing with Arabic and Islamic heritage and materials aimed at promoting social development, and will conduct research in social matters.

They will also encourage the organisation of youth and sports activities, promote their cooperation in archaeological work and the restoration of historic sites, organise exhibitions on Arab heritage and exchange periodicals and other publications on the subject of antiquities.

Cultural agreement signed with Mauritania

Also Wednesday, Dr Ammari and Mauritanian Ambassador to Jordan Mukhtar Ould Hay signed an executive programme covering cooperation in cultural and scientific fields between Jordan and Mauritania for the period 1996 to 1998.

Under the terms of the agreement the two sides

undertake to cooperate in higher education, health, social development, information and media, culture, education and antiquities.

The two countries agreed that the Jordanian and Mauritanian universities exchange visits by teaching staff and administrators, and exchange expertise in scientific research.

They also will exchange publications and visits by grade school teachers, with Jordan seconding teachers to Mauritanian schools. The agreement also stipulates advancing cooperation in health and social development spheres.

The two sides will also exchange documentary films, visits by journalists, theatre, musical and folklore groups and will hold exhibitions to highlight each other's national heritage.

6 killed in Mafrqa road collision involving bus, pickup truck

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Six people were killed and one was listed in critical condition Tuesday following a road accident at the Balama Highway, according to police and Civil Defence Department (CDD) officials.

A police official told the Jordan Times Wednesday that the accident, which occurred Tuesday night, involved a bus and a pick-

up. He said the bus driver Najeh Abdul Rahman, 38, was speeding on a two-lane road in Mafrqa, and met head on with the pickup while trying to overtake another vehicle.

The official said that all five passengers in the pickup were killed instantly. He added that the sixth victim was riding in the bus.

The deceased were identified by police and CDD as Farhan Mohammad, 27,

Ali Ibrahim Abu Sameh, 48, Imad Ali, 27, Mahmoud Musa, 32, Hanafi Abdul Tawab, 33 and Ramsi Ahmad, 18.

Last week six people were killed in the Kingdom in road accidents. Dozens more were injured during the same period.

Last year, according to traffic statistics, almost 400 people were killed and 9,000 injured in more than 24,000 road accidents between the months of January and September.

Court holds Bay'at Al Imam defendants in contempt

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The State Security Court Wednesday referred three of 13 defendants accused of sabotage to the state prosecutor general charging them with contempt of court after they hurled insults at the tribunal.

The court also expelled seven

defendants for disrupting the court.

Some of the defendants refused to stand up when the judge called their names and said "we refuse to stand up because we do not respect this atheist court."

The group, known as Bay'at Al Imam (pledge of allegiance), who were expelled twice in the past two months from court for disrupt-

ing the session, are also charged with slander against His Majesty King Hussein and illegal possession and manufacturing of explosive materials.

After adjourning the session for half-an-hour, Presiding Judge Colonel Hafez Amin ordered to transfer defendants Ahmad Fadel Nazal, Mustafa Hassan Musa and Nasri Izzedin Mohammad, to State

Prosecutor General Major Mahmoud Obeidat on charges of contempt of court.

Defence attorney Mazen Ersheidat asked the court to allow them time to meet with their clients before proceeding with the case.

Judge Amin accepted setting Feb. 12 as the date to resume the trial.

Arabia-on-Line: A locally-launched Internet service about the Arab World

By Alia Toukan
Special to the Jordan Times

Amman — A local company is operating Arabia-on-Line, the first, and to-date, only, Internet service available from the Arab World on the World-Wide-Web (WWW) offering computer users around the globe information relating to Arab business, art, and culture.

Created by Arabian Media Concepts, an Amman-based communications company, Arabia-on-Line currently attracts approximately 30,000 "visitors" (those who access the programme) a week, according to Khaldoun Tabaza, director of the company.

Mr. Tabaza said the creators of Arabia-on-Line initially thought of this idea when they noticed a lack of material relating to the Arab World on the Internet.

Although 70% of the visitors are from the U.S., and about 20% are from Europe, only 10% are from the Arab World. Mr. Tabaza explained the low number of visitors from the Arab World as a consequence of Egypt, Bahrain, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) being the only Arab countries currently "on-line."

At present in Jordan, only government and educational sectors are on-line, thus allowing them access to what is commonly known

as the "information super-highway."

The rest of the country has access to a local BBS system (bulletin board system), as well as an Internet electronic mailing system (e-mail) through companies such as Nets and Access.

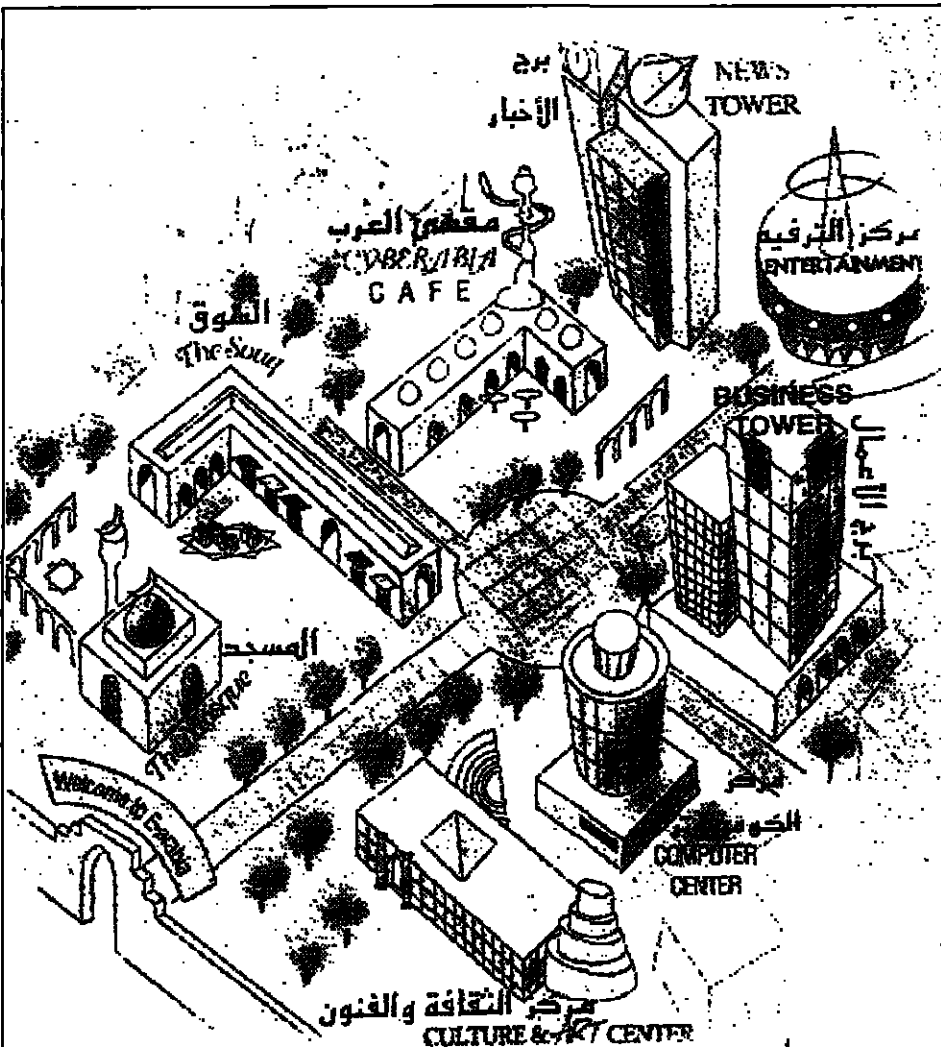
The private sector is expected to go on-line by the beginning of March, said Mr. Tabaza.

With Arabia-on-Line, a service providing information in both Arabic and English, visiting Internet users can "surf" through "E-Arabia" (electronic Arabia), a graphic representation of an Arab city with various cultural and business buildings.

One can browse through the culture and arts centre, the business tower, the computer centre, the souq, and the entertainment centre, and tap into related information. For example, selecting the mosque from the display monitor, a user links into Islamic resources on the Internet.

The business tower provides information about business in the Arab World, as well as a directory, enabling Arab and international companies to contact each other.

Also pictured on e-Arabia, is a news tower which when selected, provides access to Arabic and English publications such as The Star, Al Taqiyah Wal Aamal, and Byte Middle East, among others.



The E-Arabia graphic representation of Arabia-on-Line

An added attraction to the news tower, according to the creators and developers of Arabia-on-line, is access to Voice of America, which can be heard in Arabic at any time.

The London-based Quds Press, a news agency specialising in middle eastern political and economic affairs, has just been launched, and is the first news agency in the Arab

World to go on the Internet. For those looking for discussions and a "meeting place," the cyberbaria cafe provides a venue for exchange on Arab World topics.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

- * "Tramontana" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman on Thursday at 4:30 p.m.
- * "A Few Good Men" at the American Centre on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

MA'AN CULTURAL DAY

- * A cultural day devoted to Ma'an Governorate on Thursday at the Royal Cultural Centre including a plastic abstract art exhibition, poetry recital at 8:00 p.m. and a concert at 9:00 p.m.

PLAY

- * "Ramadan Supermarket" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre on Thursday 8:00 p.m.

CONCERTS

- * Musical performance by Jalal Al Wandi and Mohammad Jabbar respectively on Thursday and Friday at the Phoenix Gallery, Gardens Street at 8:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- * Paintmaking and paintings by Jordanian artist Yasser Dweik at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Luweibdeh. Also displaying paintings and sculptures by contemporary artists (until Feb. 18).
- * Contemporary and Traditional Jewellery at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre, Shmeisani (Tel. 699141) (until Jan. 31).
- * Plastic (abstract) art exhibition by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Utheina (until Feb. 6).
- * Paintings by artist Raphael Chabrol at the French Cultural Centre (until Jan. 31).

Tanzania reopens border to allow in 16,000 Rwandan refugees

NGARA, Tanzania (R) — A senior Tanzanian official said Wednesday his country was reopening its frontier to allow in 16,000 Rwandan refugees fleeing ethnic violence in Burundi.

"I have been instructed by central government to allow in Rwandan refugees now at

the border. We are expecting not less than 16,000," Brigadier General Sylvester Hemedi, district commissioner for the Ngara area, told Reuters.

The Rwandan Hutu refugees, in northeast Burundi since 1994 and fearing attack by Burundi's

mainly Tutsi army, have been camped at the border since last Sunday hoping Tanzania would reopen the frontier closed last year.

Brig. Hemedi stressed the decision to let them in was a humanitarian one and did not mean the border with Burundi was officially reopened for refugees.

A senior aid official at Ngara told Reuters earlier that Tanzania was poised to admit the refugees which he estimated to number 12,000.

"The Tanzanian government has, I understand, allowed these people to come in. This is what has just been confirmed," said Abbas Gullet of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) by telephone.

Tanzanian Defence Minister Edgar Majogo said Saturday the impoverished east African country, already sheltering 700,000 Rwandan Hutus, could no longer cope on its own.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was earlier uncertain whether the stranded refugees would be allowed to cross.

"There are 10-12,000 refugees on either side of the border. All I can say is the people inside Tanzania will be allowed to stay," said Peter Kessler, the UNHCR spokesman in Nairobi.

Tanzania shut its borders to the refugees Sunday after allowing in 15,000 last week who said they were

fleeing a campaign of terror by Burundi's army to drive them out.

Those who crossed last week were from Mugano Camp and said 20 refugees were killed and many more wounded when Tutsi soldiers torched their camp on Jan. 17. The Burundi army has denied the reports.

The thousands of Rwandans stuck on the Burundi side Wednesday were living in Ntamba Camp and fled when they feared the army would attack them next.

Mr. Kessler said the UNHCR had received reports of beatings by Burundi soldiers of refugees who returned to the burned-out Ntamba Camp Monday. He said a UNHCR official would be sent to Ntamba to assess the security situation.

The Rwandan Hutu refugees are caught in a trap, sandwiched between a hostile Tutsi army in Burundi and Tanzania's reluctance to open its doors.

Their only other option is to go home but many can expect to be arrested and accused of involvement in the 1994 genocide of up to a million Rwandan Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

On Tuesday only 168 Rwandan Hutus from Ntamba Camp crossed back home despite earlier reports that many more had chosen that course.

Following the evacuation of Mugano and Ntamba about 110,000 Rwandan Hutus still remain in four other camps in Burundi, aid agencies say.



Rwandan refugees enter Tanzania at the Ngundusi border point, after fleeing tribal fighting in Burundi. More than 15,000 refugees have entered Tanzania while 19,000 are trapped in a no-man's-land area between borders, after Tanzanian troops closed the border (Reuters photo)

Scalfaro bows to pressure from Berlusconi to delay consultations

ROME (AFP) — Bowing to pressure from media magnate Silvio Berlusconi, President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro has postponed to Monday a new round of talks to find a way out of Italy's political crisis, newspapers said Wednesday.

The Italian media reported that the talks, which were scheduled to resume Thursday, were delayed to give Mr. Berlusconi more time to iron out differences with his main right-wing ally, neo-fascist leader Gianfranco Fini.

But the left-wing La Repubblica said that no final decision was likely to emerge next Monday.

Mr. Scalfaro is seeking at all costs to avoid early elections, which would prove disruptive during Italy's six-month presidency of the European Union, which includes the March launch of a conference to review the landmark 1991 Maastricht Treaty on European Union.

But his marathon efforts to secure a majority for caretaker Prime Minister Lamberto Dini — last week he consulted with 26 political parties — have proved fruitless so far, leaving elections as the likeliest way out.

Mr. Berlusconi, whose trial on corruption charges opened in Milan last Wednesday, also wants to avoid an electoral campaign during a trial likely to drag

on until the spring.

A key player in efforts to broker a solution, the media magnate favours a broad-based government of right-wing and left-wing forces to push through constitutional reforms.

Newspapers Wednesday said he was seeking more time to convince his main ally Gianfranco Fini, leader of the neo-fascist National Alliance, to agree to such a solution.

Mr. Fini, whose party is credited with a poll-topping 25 per cent of voting intentions, wants early elections.

The Italian press Wednesday carried a document drawn up by the three main parties — Berlusconi's Forza Italia, the Party of the Democratic Left and the National Alliance — which defines reforms, above all an electoral law — they have pledged to push through together.

Mr. Fini, for his part, dismissed what he called an "accord of experts" and reiterated Wednesday that "no step forward has yet been accomplished."

Mr. Scalfaro has requested that the parties sign a written document before moving to form a new government to avoid any last minute changes of heart.

Meanwhile, bargaining behind the scenes on which candidates to put forward in the event of early elections

was already underway, parliamentary sources said.

If no solution emerges in the coming days, Mr. Scalfaro could extend the consultations until Feb. 5, before dissolving parliament and calling elections for April 14, after the Easter holidays.

Mr. Dini, whose government is still handling day to day affairs, had pledged to step down by the end of 1995 after his "interim" administration has lasted almost exactly a year.

Mr. Scalfaro accepted his resignation on Jan. 11 after a three-day debate in parliament failed to secure the political backing to stay in office at the head of his cabinet of non-partisan technocrats.

A former Treasury Minister in Mr. Berlusconi's cabinet, Mr. Dini has been praised for the doggedness with which he carried out a perilous but much-needed reform of Italy's chaotic pensions system and has earned the respect of international bankers for the relative stability of the economy during his tenure.

Though close to Mr. Berlusconi, the circumspect Dini avoided flagging his political colours, and his year in power has served to alienate him from the media magnate and his allies.

U.K. Labour leader's supporter refuses to quit in education row

LONDON (R) — A close ally of British opposition leader Tony Blair Wednesday refused to resign in a row over education which has tarnished Mr. Blair's image of infallibility.

Some Labour Party MPs said they were pressing Mr. Blair to sack health spokeswoman Harriet Harman to prevent the party suffering further damage from claims she was guilty of hypocrisy in deciding to send her 11-year-old son to a school which selects its pupils on their ability.

"I am not resigning. I think it is in the best interests of the party that I do my job," Ms. Harman said in a BBC interview.

Mr. Blair, facing the most

serious outbreak of faction fighting since he became leader in 1994, has said he will not sack Ms. Harman for a personal decision taken in the interests of her child.

Ms. Harman has decided to send her son Joe to a grammar school in outer London — the type of "elitist" school abhorred by Labour supporters — rather than an all-ability comprehensive in her inner city suburb.

She is likely to face a rough ride when she attends a meeting of Labour MPs in the House of Commons. Some Labour MPs said she will have to step down because of the depth of anger in the parliamentary

party.

"I think Harriet Harman can count and I suspect that at the end of the day, she will decide to do what is in the best interests of the party and get this issue out of the way," said left-winger Ken Livingstone.

Mr. Blair's left-wing deputy, John Prescott, was reported Wednesday as having refused to appear on television to back Ms. Harman, who has supported Mr. Blair as he overhauled Labour policies and moved the party to the centre of British politics.

Prime Minister John Major has been delighted by the Harman crisis.

S. Korea's Kim Dae-Jung attacks president

SEOUL (R) — Veteran South Korean opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung accused his archrival President Kim Young-Sam Wednesday of seeking punishment for his two disgraced predecessors as a cynical election ploy.

"I must say his motivation for punishing two former presidents is not pure," Kim Dae-Jung, head of the National Congress for New Politics, told reporters.

"The prosecutions are part of the ruling camp's election strategy to gain victory in parliamentary elections."

Former Presidents Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo, both ex-generals, were Tuesday charged with sedition over events surrounding the 1980 army massacre of pro-democracy protesters in the southern city of Kwangju.

Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh, now in detention, also face bribery charges as well as separate mutiny charges over the 1979 coup that pushed them to power. They face possible death sentences.

Mr. Kim Dae-Jung said the sleazy links between politicians and businessmen in the past and legal proceedings over the Kwangju massacre would figure high in parliamentary elections in April.

Although legal steps against Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh were helping to reduce corruption and check the military's involvement in politics, they were also being used to smear the opposition, he told the Seoul Foreign Correspondents' Club.

He accused prosecutors of deliberately ignoring wrongs committed against him personally when announcing the outcome of an investigation into the Kwangju massacre, in which about 200 people were killed by official count.



Hundreds of Colombian university students protest in front of Congress demanding the resignation of Colombian President Ernesto Samper. The students, held back by soldiers, converged in front of the legislative building a day after former Defence Minister Fernando Botero told local television Mr. Samper knew about drug money entering his 1994 election campaign, reviving the country's worst political crises in decades (Reuters photo)

Colombia minister resigns amid crisis

BOGOTA (R) — Colombian Health Minister Augusto Galan Sarmiento resigned late Tuesday, saying the country's political crisis was "seriously undermining the credibility of the government," a local television programme reported.

Mr. Galan handed his letter of resignation to President Ernesto Samper during a meeting at the presidential palace, the CM nightly news programme said.

Mr. Galan's resignation is the first political loss for Mr. Samper following the latest series of drug corruption allegations against him.

The country's most serious political crisis in decades worsened late Monday when former Defence Minister Fernando Botero told two television news programmes that Mr. Samper knew drug traffickers had partly financed his election campaign in 1994.

Mr. Samper later denied the allegation, calling Mr. Botero a liar.

"The political circumstances in which we are living show me ... that my presence before the ministry must come to an end," the programme quoted Mr. Galan's letter of resignation as saying.

Mr. Galan said in his letter, parts of which were cited on the programme, that the crisis was "seriously undermining the government's credibility."

Although a presidential spokesman could not confirm the report, the local RCN Radio network also announced the resignation.

Mr. Galan is the second minister of Mr. Samper's government to resign since the crisis erupted last summer. The first was Mr. Botero, who stepped down last August after published testimony to prosecutors by the campaign's treasurer implicated him in the scandal.

On Tuesday, Mr. Samper made it clear he had no intention of resigning over charges he knowingly accepted about \$6 million in campaign contributions from the Cali cartel.

Start of the strike at 6 a.m. "The city looks as if it's under an undeclared curfew," one witness said. "The army is keeping a close watch on every person moving out on the streets and asking them over microphones to leave immediately."

More bombs exploded as activists returned to the streets after Mrs. Khaleda's departure, witnesses said.

Following prayers, Mrs. Khaleda held a closed-door meeting with local leaders of her Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the only major party contesting the election. Other participants come from a host of small opposition parties and alliances, many previously unheard of.

The main opposition Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina and its allies, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-E-Islami, have vowed to boycott the Feb. 15 election, which they call a farce.

They have been campaigning since 1994 for Mrs. Khaleda's ousting and the holding of elections under a neutral administration on the grounds that the bnp had rigged a previous by-election.

Mrs. Khaleda has rejected the demands as unconstitutional.

"I don't think it's convenient for the country — the idea of taking a vacation when there's a crisis," he told the local Caracol Radio Network when asked if he had considered at least stepping down temporarily.

"You only go on vacation when there are no problems at the office," he added. "We're going to continue with the reins of state in our hands. We're going to keep governing, the country is not going to be set adrift."

Mr. Botero, breaking a five-month silence, strongly disputed Mr. Samper's repeated claim that if drug money entered his campaign it did so without his knowledge, saying in effect he was a liar.

In a letter to the nation published in the daily El Tiempo newspaper Tuesday, Mr. Botero said the most pressing question he wanted to answer for all Colombians was whether or not Mr. Samper knew about the drug money that allegedly backed his campaign.

"With infinite sadness, because I have a high personal regard for President Samper, I must answer clearly and convincingly that he did," Mr. Botero said. "I must also say that President Samper is seriously compromised in these events."

Mr. Botero was not only the campaign's manager but also Mr. Samper's friend and right-hand man.

Suggesting that his testimony could lead to Mr. Samper's ouster, Mr. Botero added that his belated decision to tell the truth should help Colombia "close this sad chapter in its history."

About 1,500 university students chanted slogans calling for Mr. Samper's resignation Tuesday in the centre of Bogota. Fears of growing political instability put downward pressure on the country's already depressed stock market and drove the Colombian peso sharply lower against the dollar.

Scores hurt in strike-hit Bangladesh city

SYLHET, Bangladesh (Agencies) — Opposition activists battled troops Wednesday as Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia launched her campaign for a general election which political opponents have vowed to disrupt.

The opposition called a day-long strike in Sylhet to disrupt Mrs. Khaleda's visit and her launch of the campaign for the Feb. 15 elections.

Officials said the prime minister spent three hours in the city and offered prayers at the tombs of two Muslim saints, marking the official start of the campaign.

Hundreds of troops and police were deployed to avert trouble. Witnesses said troops battled with opposition activists trying to stage a demonstration and set up road blockades. More than 40 people were injured, they said.

Police arrested an unspecified number of opposition leaders and workers. Shops, schools and most offices were closed. No transport moved on the streets except for vehicles carrying security men, witnesses said.

Nervousness gripped the city as dozens of homemade bombs went off at the

start of the strike at 6 a.m. "The city looks as if it's under an undeclared curfew," one witness said. "The army is keeping a close watch on every person moving out on the streets and asking them over microphones to leave immediately."

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2 charged in robbery of actor

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Two men were charged Tuesday with robbing and pistol-whipping actor Harry Dean Stanton on his home over the weekend, court officials said. Alberto Guerrero, 20, and Jose Rivera, 18, were held on \$945,000 and \$960,000 bail, respectively, on charges of carjacking, home invasion, robbery, assault with a deadly weapon and false imprisonment. The charges stem from the robbery Saturday of the 69-year-old actor who was featured in Repo Man, The Last Temptation Of Christ, Pretty In Pink and Godfather, Part II. Guerrero, Rivera and a third person who is still at large, knocked on Stanton's door and then pushed their way into his home in a secluded area near Hollywood, according to deputy district attorney Carol Fisch. They tied up the actor, kicked him and hit him in the head with a handgun before fleeing in the actor's Lexus, which contained a locating device which Stanton activated, she said. "They hit him in both eyes with the butt of the gun," Ms. Fisch said. Using the locating device, police found the car and staked it out, waiting for the assailants to return. A short pursuit ended when they crashed the Lexus into a tree.

Attackers steal more than a purse

HAMBURG, Germany (AFP) — A 43-year-old Hamburg man took 3,000 marks (\$2,100) in a Hamburg gaming saloon, only to wake up in a street car and discover a cutpurse had cut worse than his purse. Police, who interviewed the victim in hospital Tuesday said that according to his account, he had been at Hamburg Railway Station late Monday night on his way home with his winnings, when two people attacked him with a spray canister. The victim fainted and later woke up in a moving streetcar to find himself covered in blood. Emergency services confirmed that attackers had not only taken his money but cut off the tip of his penis.

Despondent man cuts off organ

MANILA (AFP) — A shipyard welder cut off his penis and slashed his neck in an apparent suicide attempt after his live-in partner claimed he was impotent, local television reported Wednesday. ABS-CBN Television said Armando Cabansag was despondent after his unidentified lover of five months told him he was impotent because he failed to impregnate her, and threatened to end their union. He was rushed to hospital after severing his penis and was in a stable condition, the report said.

No money-back guarantee for customer

NANCY, France (AFP) — The disappointed customer of a prostitute complained to police in this eastern French city to get his money back after failing to perform in the back seat of his own car, police said here. The woman had accepted 200 francs (\$40) from the 60-year-old, but after he failed to position himself appropriately, she lost patience, got out of the car and resumed her habitual pitch on the street. Police said the client lodged a complaint for "fraud." Interviewed, the prostitute told police she "did not provide a money-back guarantee for unsatisfied customers."

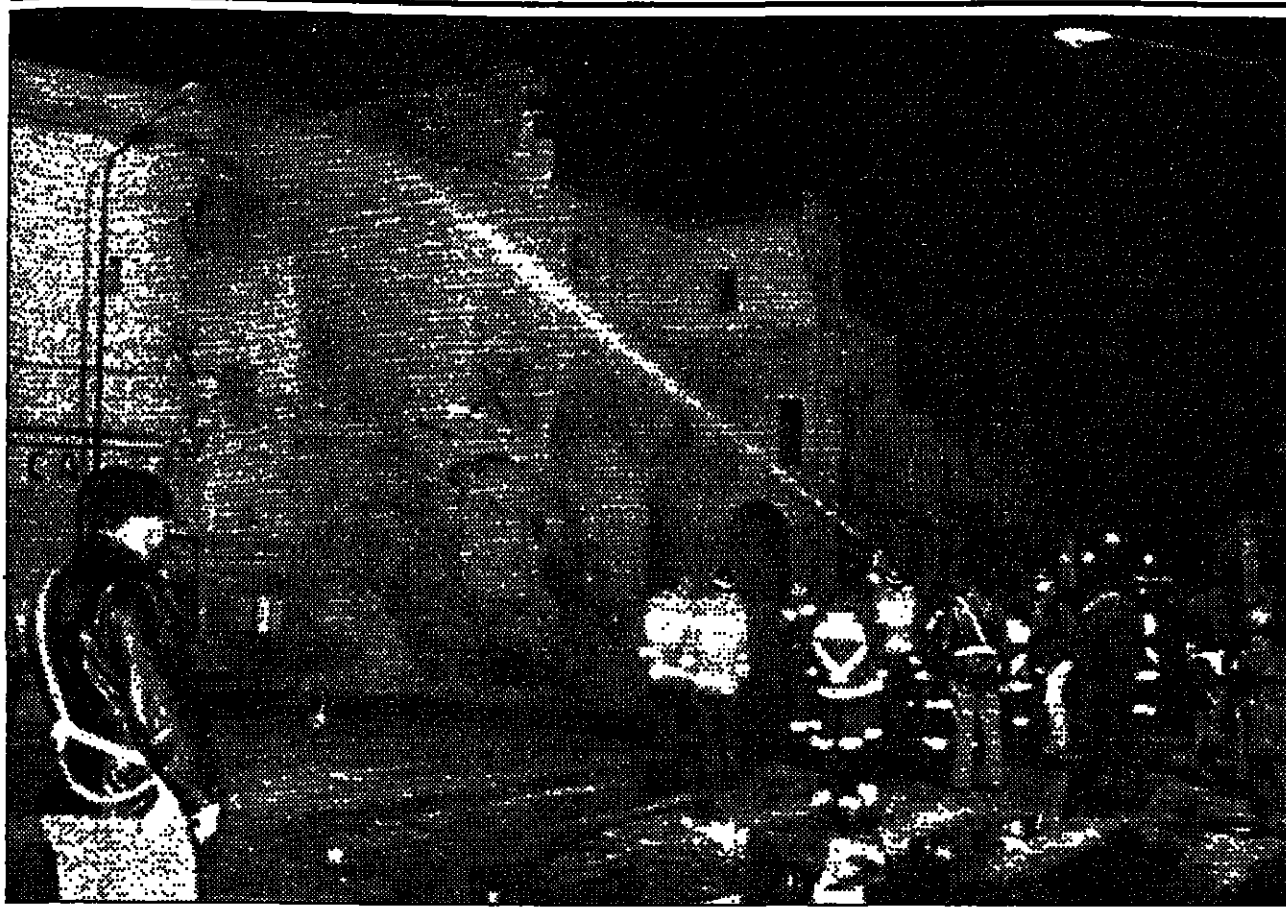
World

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Rescue workers and firemen in Secondigliano district, near Naples, spray water on the rubble after a huge explosion killed nine people. The local gas company said pipes may have ruptured when a condemned building in the area collapsed, causing gas to leak into the tunnel (Reuter photo)

Death toll in Naples blaze rises to nine

NAPLES, Italy (AFP) — The death toll from a spectacular fire which erupted in a Naples suburb overnight has risen to nine, while four people have been reported missing, authorities said Wednesday.

Preliminary reports put the death toll at six — five construction workers working on a slip road linking the peripheral district of Scandigliano with Naples,

and a young girl.

Rescue workers later unearthed three more bodies trapped inside burnt cars.

The fire triggered several powerful blasts which sent a cement mixer and dozens of cars hurtling into a crater around 20 metres wide (66 feet), firemen said.

Water pipes were also exploded by the collapse of the building, and the crater has now filled up with

water.

Meanwhile, the Naples gas company issued a statement denying earlier reports that the blaze was caused by a gas leak. It said the collapse of a three-storey apartment block caused the gas pipes to burst, which in turn sparked the fire.

An investigation has been opened to determine the cause of the blaze.

Residents of the collapsed

building said they had repeatedly complained to authorities that the building was in danger of collapse.

Panic scenes broke out Tuesday night when authorities evacuated around a thousand people from their homes, fearing further explosions. Several thousand people were also hit by gas and electricity cuts during the night.

Hopes fade for 39 Sri Lankan crash victims

COLOMBO (AFP) — Hopes were fast fading for the 39 passengers aboard a military helicopter which went missing over Tamil rebel dominated territory in northern Sri Lanka, defence officials said Wednesday.

Air force planes and navy gunboats were still searching the sea off the northern peninsula of Jaffna but there were no signs of the wreckage of the Russian-built Mi-17 which crashed Monday, a military spokesman said.

"We have still not been able to spot any part of the wreckage, dead bodies or find any survivors," chief military spokesman Sarath Munasinghe said.

He said the cause of the crash was still unknown. The government has also

sought help from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to locate the wreckage because the humanitarian organisation works in areas under rebel control where the helicopter was believed hit.

The rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), in intercepted radio messages, had reported shooting down of the helicopter over the Indian Ocean, defence sources said.

"The Tigers have said in (the northern peninsula of) Jaffna that they shot down the helicopter," a defence source said, adding that the guerrillas had made a similar claim two days earlier when nothing was hit.

However, the LTTE's

clandestine radio, the Voice of Tigers, as well as their regular statements issued from London have remained silent about the crash.

The Mi-17 helicopter was taking troops from the main air force base at Palaly on the northern edge of the Jaffna peninsula to a smaller military base at Vellaiakerni when it went down.

Evidence so far suggested that the aircraft may have been shot out of the sky by a rebel anti-aircraft gunner firing from a boat off the eastern coast of the Jaffna peninsula, probably near Point Pedro, defence sources said.

The LTTE is known to have fired medium-range

machine guns to bring down a Chinese built Y-8 cargo plane off Jaffna in November last year, killing five crew members. The rebels also possess heat-seeking anti-aircraft missiles.

The LTTE brought down at least five air force planes in the past year. The LTTE fired its first missile in April 1995 to bring down an Avro HS-748 plane near the Palaly Air Base. A total of 241 people have died in those crashes.

The Tamil Tigers are leading a protracted campaign for an independent homeland in the island's northern and eastern regions.

More than 50,000 people have died in the bitter separatist conflict in the past 23 years.

U.S. apologises to Austria over secret arms caches

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States publicly apologised to Austria Tuesday for failing to inform successive governments in Vienna that 79 secret arms caches were set up around the country half a century ago.

"We apologise to the government of Austria and to the people of Austria for the fact that since 1955, successive American administrations did not inform Austrian governments of the fact of this programme," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns told a regular news briefing.

The caches, including guns, ammunition, explosives and other supplies, were set up around the country in the early 1950s to serve partisans in the event of a Soviet invasion.

Mr. Burns said a U.S. del-

egation would go to Vienna this week to discuss with the Austrian government how to dismantle the arms caches, whose existence was first made known to the government in Vienna Saturday.

"We certainly will be willing to listen to any requests made by the Austrian government. That would only be logical, in view of the quite embarrassing situation in which we find ourselves," Mr. Burns said.

He stressed Washington's concern to maintain good relations with Austria and "to fulfil our responsibilities, now, as we try to end this intriguing and interesting episode from the cold war."

He said it was "inadmissible" that successive governments since the Austrian

state treaty in 1955 were not told of the caches, set up with the consent of the pre-1955 government. The treaty established the country's permanent neutrality and prompted the departure of Russian, French, British and U.S. forces which occupied the country after the World War II.

"I think here, as we look back on it, we think that the aim was noble, and the aim was correct. And that was to try to help Austria if Austria found itself under occupation," Mr. Burns said. "And I think that the Austrian people understand that."

"What went wrong is that Washington, in successive administrations, from the Eisenhower administration, on until this one, simply decided not to talk to the Austrian government about

it," he continued.

On Monday he said the existence of the caches surfaced during a sweep of Central Intelligence Agency files under its new director, John Deutch. The administration is establishing a list of exactly where the caches were and what they contain.

Mr. Burns said over the years four or five of the caches were inadvertently discovered by Austrians during construction work, but that the remainder have not been revealed.

"And it's now our job to locate each of them and to unearth them so that the Austrian people don't have to fear that any of these caches pose a threat to them," he said.

U.S. says joint food aid to N. Korea possible

MANILA (R) — The United States is prepared to extend food aid to North Korea, in concert with Japan and South Korea, to ease the famine threat to 130,000 people in the Stalinist country, a U.S. official indicated Wednesday.

Winston Lord, U.S. assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said he would discuss North Korea's plight with Japanese and South Korean officials at a meeting in Hawaii after his current Manila visit.

Mr. Lord, who was leaving the Philippine capital Wednesday for the Honolulu meeting, said United Nations missions sent to North Korea were reporting "serious shortages and we have to take this as being a very credible problem."

"Clearly, we would be concerned on a humanitarian basis of any suffering from people anywhere as would, I am sure, South Korean and Japanese friends," Mr. Lord told a news conference.

"So the humanitarian dimension of this will be a very important one and... I would hope we could agree in responding in a humanitarian way," he said.

Officials of the International Federation of Red Cross said Sunday more international aid was needed to feed the estimated 130,000 North Koreans on the brink of starvation and living in makeshift shelters amid bitter winter weather.

The reported near-famine situation followed torrential rains which killed as many as 300 people and left more than 600,000 homeless in

the isolated Communist state. Reclusive North Korea until recently viewed accepting foreign aid as an affront to its sovereignty.

Mr. Lord said the North Korean food situation would be part of "broad consultations" which U.S., Japanese and South Korean officials would have in Honolulu on "how we can show solidarity in our policy toward North Korea."

The United States is trying to draw North Korea into the international community to promote stability in the region as well as make sure that Pyongyang's potential nuclear threat was frozen and eventually dismantled, he said.

"It is very difficult to know exactly what the food situation is in North Korea not to mention anything else

in North Korea... It's a very opaque society."

He said South Koreans differed on the extent of the food problem in the North. "There are some who may believe that it's being exaggerated. Others may believe it's quite serious but I don't want to prejudge our discussions in Hawaii," he added.

"I am there to listen to our South Korean friends and our Japanese friends on their assessment of the situation in North Korea generally, including the food situation."

"There are many other aspects we have to discuss, convey our own impressions and then together try to craft a joint approach," he added.

Mr. Lord said the United States would like some day to be able to work with North Korea.

Chechens free 45 hostages; still hold police as PoWs

NOVOGROZNY, Russia (AFP) — Chechen separatists freed 40 to 50 civilian hostages Wednesday, but kept 23 police officers as prisoners of war, two weeks after a bold Chechen raid in the Russian Republic of Dagestan.

The hostages were released unconditionally and allowed to return to Dagestan, travelling in a yellow bus from the eastern Chechen town of Novogrozny.

They were accompanied by a convoy of Dagestani leaders who were there to guarantee their safe return.

But 23 police officers, also captured in Dagestan, were considered prisoners of war and would only be returned in exchange for Chechen prisoners captured by the Russians during the

fighting in Dagestan, rebel chief of staff Aslan Maskhadov said.

In Moscow the Russian ITAR-TASS news agency, quoting a Dagestani official, reported Wednesday that 45 civilian hostages had crossed the border into Dagestan at 5:00 p.m. (1400 GMT).

Their bus was to arrive later in the day in Kizlyar, in the north of the republic, where a large crowd was gathering to welcome them back, the news agency said.

Another Dagestani source, quoted by the Interfax News Agency, claimed that the returnees included some Dagestani police officers, as well as civilians. The police officers still being held by the Chechens were reportedly from Novosibirsk, in

Siberia.

Salman Raduyev, leader of the guerrillas who attacked Dagestan, said he held a further 29 power station workers seized in a separate incident near the Chechen capital Grozny.

They too would only be released in return for Chechen prisoners, he said.

There were conflicting figures on the total number of hostages released Wednesday, with officials saying between 42 and 50.

Mr. Raduyev led a group of about 200 guerrillas into Dagestan, attacked a Russian air base, then took hostages to guarantee safe passage back to Chechnya.

The rebels and their captives were trapped by Russian forces in the village of Pervomaiskaya, near the

border with Chechnya.

Before dawn last Thursday, the Chechens and dozens of hostages broke out of encircling Russian troops and escaped to Chechnya.

In Moscow, Interfax reported that the hostages freed Wednesday had been exchanged for the bodies of 42 separatist fighters killed during the hostage-taking in Pervomaiskaya.

Officials from Dagestan handed over the 42 bodies after they had been identified, a Dagestani source was quoted saying.

The remains of other separatist fighters still in the custody of Dagestani authorities will be returned to the separatists as soon as they have been identified, the source added.

Japan premier easily beats back election calls

TOKYO (R) — Japan's new Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto sailed through his first test of strength with the opposition Wednesday, easily beating back calls for snap elections.

Buoyed by a day of sparkling economic news, Mr. Hashimoto also deflected demands to shelve a scheme to use billions of dollars in taxpayer money to bail out failed home mortgage firms, the biggest test for his new government.

In an almost dream start to his first parliamentary session as prime minister, Mr. Hashimoto was never seriously challenged by the opposition's first questioning of him since he took over the leadership post two weeks ago.

Mr. Hashimoto's task was made easier by the announcement Wednesday of official figures which showed Japan's contentious trade surplus fell for the first time in five years in 1995.

The Finance Ministry said the surplus in 1995 fell to \$107.10 billion from a record \$120.86 billion a year earlier.

The trade data pushed the dollar above 106 yen in Tokyo Wednesday morning, a figure which is also good for Japan's economic recovery.

There were no unexpected questions or revelations about the bailout scheme, despite opposition promises before parliament opened Monday that it would use the issue to force an early election.

Instead, opposition leader Ichiro Ozawa, head of the Shinshinto (New Frontier Party), was content to spend most of his time simply outlining his group's alternative policies.

Mr. Hashimoto plans to

use 685 billion yen (\$68 billion) in public money to wind up the seven failed mortgage firms which over-extended mainly on real estate ventures in the 1980s "bubble" years when the Japan economy was flying high.

The firms, known as "jusen", had outstanding loans of about 10.72 trillion yen (\$102 billion) as of June 1995, of which about 8.13 trillion yen (\$77.4 billion) were problem loans and at least 6.27 trillion yen (\$59.7 billion) unrecoverable.

There was no question even raised about Mr. Hashimoto's possible role in the debacle from his time as finance minister in 1990 when the Finance Ministry introduced restrictions on lending to real estate developers but exempted jusen.

Mr. Ozawa only singled out Mr. Hashimoto's predecessor, Socialist Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, and outgoing Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura, as individuals whose actions needed to be examined.

Mr. Hashimoto's conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is in a 19-month-old coalition with Mr. Murayama's Socialists and Mr. Takemura's Sakigake party.

"It's very regrettable that we cannot directly look closely into the responsibilities of former Prime Minister Murayama and former Finance Minister Takemura over the current parliament's main issue on jusen," Mr. Ozawa said.

"I urge that there be a quick break up of the lower house of parliament to seek the people's opinion," Mr. Ozawa said in demanding polls.

He said the polls were needed so the people could judge who was responsible for the jusen crisis.

More staff leave Diana

LONDON (R) — Britain's Princess Diana lost a secretary and a chauffeur Tuesday just a day after her private secretary resigned, her office said.

The departures are the latest in an exodus of staff that began in November when the princess gave a television interview, admitting to adultery and suggesting Prince Charles was unfit to become king. Her press secretary who was not consulted about the interview resigned the day after it was aired.

"One secretary has resigned and one of the chauffeurs is finishing up," Princess Diana's spokesman said.

He would give no further information about why the secretary, Nicky Cockell, had resigned but he said the chauffeur was leaving after more than five years of service because Princess Diana no longer needed a full-time driver.

Ms. Cockell's resignation leaves Princess Diana, the estranged wife of heir-to-the throne Prince Charles, with just two relatively junior staff to run her office.

Her private secretary Patrick Jephson, who had worked for Princess Diana or Prince Charles for eight years, quit Monday, saying his parting was "perfectly amicable" and denying media reports he was angry about the television interview.

Princess Diana, 34, did not inform her advisers or her mother-in-law Queen Elizabeth about the interview until just a few hours before it was broadcast.

She won huge public sympathy from the television interview in which she talked of her misery during her marriage to Prince Charles, who has said he never loved her and confessed to having a mistress.

But it infuriated the royal family and Princess Diana appears increasingly isolated in her private life.

The staff departures have left her without key advisers when she is negotiating with lawyers and the royal family over an expected divorce from Prince Charles and her new public role.



Taiwan President Lee Teng-Hui (right) and Premier Lien Chan wave to supporters during the open ceremony of their election campaign headquarters in Taipei Wednesday. Mr. Lee and Mr. Lien are the Nationalists' presidential and vice presidential nominees, respectively, in Taiwan's inaugural direct presidential elections scheduled for March 23 (Reuter photo)

Lee Teng-Hui: Next 4 years to decide fate of Taiwan

TAIPEI (AFP) — Taiwanese President Lee Teng-Hui said Wednesday the next four years would decide if Taiwan is to lead the process of unification with China or simply be taken over by Beijing.

"The next four years will be full of challenges. They will decide the fate of Taiwan, whether to surrender or be united, or whether to lead the unification," Mr. Lee told supporters during the inauguration of his campaign headquarters in Taipei.

He did not elaborate on how Taiwan could lead the process of unification, but said the country needed a president who was known on the international stage and had "fame, wisdom, courage and insight."

Of all the candidates standing for upcoming presidential elections only he and his vice presidential running mate Premier Lien Chan had the necessary qualities, Mr. Lee said, adding that only when they were elected would Taiwan's future be secure.

Mr. Lee is expected to win the island's first direct presidential elections against former dissident Peng Ming-min of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), ousted ruling party Vice Chairman Lin Yang-Kang, and Chen Li-An, former head of the government watchdog, the Control Yuan.

He called on all 13 million eligible voters to cast their ballots, saying the first popularly elected president must have at least 50 per cent of the votes.

"On March 23, 1996, the people here will be their own masters to elect their own president... This grand historic mission is jointly achieved by the 21 million compatriots here... We all are making history," said Mr. Lee, who will be the last president elected only by the 314-seat National Assembly.

China, which views Taiwan as a renegade province, has voiced suspicion over the elections, saying they are the first step by the island towards independence.

Beijing has threatened to invade Taiwan if it formally declares independence. Meanwhile, authorities Wednesday appealed for calm following a U.S. press report that China had completed plans for an attack on the Nationalist island.

"So far, we have not received any message that can confirm the report," but people "must remain calm and have confidence in the defence capability of the armed forces here," Chen Yung-Tso, acting spokesman of the Foreign Ministry, told reporters here.

He was referring to a New York Times report Wednesday that China's leadership has sent clear warnings to the U.S. administration that it has completed plans for an attack on Taiwan which could come after the March presidential election.

Mr. Chen said Taipei has maintained close but unofficial contacts with Washington, but so far the government had not received any message from the United States informing it of the reported attack plan.

According to Vice Foreign Minister Huang Hsiu-Jih, China has repeatedly said it would only attack if Taiwan declared independence or there was foreign intervention in Taiwanese affairs.

"If the two preconditions cannot be established, it would be unlikely the Chinese Communists would attack Taiwan," he said.

State television here quoted news agencies as saying that both China's Foreign and Defence ministries had denied the report.

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Comprehensive peace in the making

THERE IS much hope that the Syrian-Israeli talks that resumed in Washington Wednesday might lead to an early breakthrough. The two sides seem to be determined to achieve quick results. There are always, of course, the obvious factors which have clearly influenced the two sides to start talking to one another instead of at one another. Washington is known to have been exerting pressure on Israel and Syria to deliver on their commitments for peace this year and preferably in the course of the few months remaining before the U.S. Presidential elections. President Bill Clinton needs to show that regional and comprehensive peace in the Middle East has been finally attained during his "first" tenure in office. Without Damascus joining the bandwagon of peace in the area, there can be no credible claim that peace in the Middle East has finally dawned on all the countries of the region.

It is well-known that the 1996 presidential elections in the U.S. will be hotly contested with the Republican Party determined to snatch power from the Democrats in the White House as they succeeded in doing in Congress last year. An equally pressing point is the upcoming Israeli elections which Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and his Labour Party would like to win on the basis of the much talked about regional and comprehensive peace that includes their country's arch enemy Syria. Mr. Peres needs to know as early as possible whether to call for an early election which he appears to be poised to win in the wake of the assassination of his predecessor Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the backlash against the right that the assassination has caused. Waiting until October, the scheduled date of the Knesset elections, could pose a gamble for Mr. Peres and his party as the strength of his party may erode by then. Still the sticking points that have divided Syria and Israel so far have centred on the extent of Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, the nature of the peace regime between the two countries and the security arrangements on the Heights. In retrospect, the principal issue remains the extent of peace that is envisioned by Damascus. Everything else is destined to fall into place the minute this dimension is resolved.

Damascus has been credited with making the first move on the eve of the start of the new round of peace talks by making a concession on the placement of early warning systems on its territory to allay Israeli fears. Syrian President Hafez Assad insists with justification, though, on mutual security measures because his country too has a lot to fear from Israel. The history of the region corroborates the Syrian anxieties and we naturally support the demand of Damascus for total security arrangements as well as complete Israeli withdrawal from its territory. As for the kind of peace that the two countries should aim for, all that we can say in this regard is that it should correspond with the extent of Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, the long-term Israeli nuclear weapons programme, the resolution of the Palestinian question as well as its water policy. These are reasonable and equitable parameters by which the two sides can determine the nature of peace that they may enjoy after so many years of hostility.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

SAMIR QTAMI a writer for Al Ra'i lauded the efforts of the Jordanian Consumers Protection Society (JCPS) of trying to help the public fight over rising prices, and the greed of certain merchants. Calling on the government to back the society's endeavours, Samir Qtami said that the society can only succeed if it is supported by members of the public as well, by responding favourably to its calls, like it did in the case of coffee. The writer put forth ideas to help control the rising cost of living, noting that it is almost impossible for the government to keep control over everything without immediate response on the part of the public. He said that though the income tax department can help in this regard by collecting increased amounts of taxes from those merchants who accumulate sudden wealth, the chambers of industry and trade should cooperate with the government in ensuring that merchants abide by reasonable margin of profit for their goods and that the JCPS pursue a campaign of spreading awareness among members of the public on ways of fighting off acts of manipulation and profiteering.

A writer for Al Dustour has charged that the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) has failed over the years to keep its promises of expanding the telephone network in a manner that would cater to the requirements of the economic development. The recent promises made by the TCC director about the immediate installation of 5,000 new lines will not convince anyone that this is really going to happen because the public has been hearing promises over the years without seeing any of them realised, said Mohammad Duoud. Of course, should the 5,000 lines be installed in the coming month, as is promised by the TCC, it will bring relief to many citizens or businesses that have been waiting for them for so long, he said. But should the TCC find itself unable to keep its promises, it ought to declare the facts openly and frankly, he demanded. Needless to say that telephones are very essential factors for economic development, especially as the Kingdom is opening its doors to investors from around the world, added the writer. He said the TCC should revise its plans and undertake serious steps for meeting the economic challenges that await Jordan and the Middle East region in the era of peace.

View From Academia

Time for a distinguished university

IN VIEW of the many significant recent developments — within the education sector itself, within our society at large and within the region as a whole — time appears to be ripe for the establishment of a distinguished university. Even though we have good, very good and even excellent universities, we do not have any university of the exceptional calibre we have been dreaming of having for years.

We must begin by affirming our understanding of the conditions governing the establishment and performance of our existing universities (both public and private), our appreciation of the many services they have been rendering and our true pride in the battles they have been waging to survive, thrive and prosper.

One must be fair. For decades now, our public universities have contributed crucially to the development and progress we have so far witnessed, and to the development and progress of many of our neighbouring countries. Within the Arab World, Jordanian universities (which are more liberal in their outlook and dynamic in their approach than most universities in the region) enjoy an excellent reputation, and deservedly so. Moreover, many of our graduates have distinguished themselves in various fields.

But we are all aware of the many staunch impediments which inhibit, and at times severely cripple, their performance. The bottom line here is that our public universities are, despite the immense autonomous status they enjoy, virtually state universities. As such, they

have an obligation, first and foremost, to cater for the needs of the public for whose "service" they have been created in the first place, and not to look after their own needs, standards and status. It is extremely hard to strike a satisfactory balance between the demands of the public and the aspirations of the universities themselves.

What do you do, as a public university, when at the end of the year the parents who have finished the lawhi successfully want to see them join "our national" universities and not study abroad and thus "waste" valuable national funds and when they exercise all kinds of pressure, through the media and parliament, to expand admission? No matter how conscious or cautious you are about maintaining certain academic "standards" and "criteria" you will end up admitting more than you wish to admit. Classes will be crowded, and the levels of students will be immensely discrepant. Can you refuse appointment or tenure to a "son" of the "homeland" who has received a Ph. D. from somewhere in Lala or Lulu land on the grounds that he does not come close even to the bare minimum of standards? I can cite a zillion other reasons or incidents why our public universities cannot be what we want them to be, but you get the picture.

Why do we want a distinguished university?

Many reasons. One reason has already been suggested, namely, that we do not have distinguished higher education. Our public universities offer, in the best of seasons, good basic

education, and no more. As for our private universities, it is too early to tell what they will be like. At this point, most of them worry more about attracting enough students and instructors to apply than the quality of those students and instructors.

The second obvious reason is that our universities do not cater well enough to the needs of our excellent students. Our public schools, though unsatisfactory in many ways, do provide us annually with a number of students who are either outstanding and exceptional or have the potential to be so. And we also get many outstanding and exceptional students from many of our private schools which offer first-class education and experience. With the way things are at our existing universities, these students do not find much challenge inside and outside class. This is something we have to worry about seriously.

The third reason has to do with the changes and challenges of the times. If we are serious about meeting the twenty-first century with different qualifications and preparedness than we have met the present century, we have to offer quality education not just at the school level but also at the university level. It is only through providing society with quality graduates in the various fields and spheres that we can transform our society, our culture and our civilisation into something categorically better.

What kind of a university do we want?

We want a university which focuses primarily on the humanities and the social sciences. I honestly believe that we have

enough qualified doctors, engineers and pharmacists. And I also believe that our existing public and private universities have been, and will continue to be, doing a good job at training students in the various realms of science. What we need more than anything are qualified specialists in the various branches of the humanities and the social sciences. So far, the less competitive students join these specialisations and the quality of education they receive is way below the standards. Languages, literatures, sociology, private anthropology, history, anthropology, education, psychology, journalism and religious studies are crucial disciplines. I would argue that our main weakness is not so much in the technical or technological know-how but in the attitudes and moral values which shape individual performance.

You can buy the most sophisticated computer system in the whole world, and you can easily train a person to use it; but how can you guarantee that this person will take his job seriously and perform efficiently? How do we create sound moral values and healthy attitudes? Obviously, through family and school education. But also through rigorous training in the humanities and the social sciences at the college level.

And we want it also to be a university which adopts the philosophy and approach of other distinguished universities, with respect to its emphasis on interdisciplinary studies, on flexibility in catering to the individual needs of students, on competitive admission, on small numbers, etc. The most important factor in the success of

the institution (more important than any other factor) is the careful choice of the team which is to spearhead and lead the university and the teaching staff who are going to translate the philosophy into action. The team has to be truly distinguished and exceptional and the teaching staff has to be truly distinguished and exceptional (and I mean truly).

Is it possible to have such a university in our part of the world?

Yes. We now have so many public and private universities which cater to the needs of exceptional students. We have enough excellent or potentially excellent students to choose from, and we have enough excellent or potentially excellent staff members to choose from. As for money, we do not need very much to establish what we so far have established. And since we are talking about a humanities and social sciences college, we do not need sophisticated labs and advanced technical tools. We do not want a gorgeous campus and fancy buildings. All we want are excellent administrators, excellent students and excellent teachers. If we look carefully around us, we can easily find them.

We take great pride in the attention Jordan is giving to the education of disabled students and students with special needs; and we take pride in Jordan's increased commitment to quality school education. We want now some serious attention to quality education at the college level. This is a must.

Palestinian elections — first step towards state, democracy

By G. H. Jansen

EAST JERUSALEM — One should always take Yasser Arafat's statements, particularly if they are political predictions, with a large grain of salt because they always tend to be too optimistic. But his prediction, just before the first-ever Palestinian general and presidential elections, that the election would lay the foundation stone of an independent Palestinian state is solidly credible and seems to be coming true two days after the election.

Thus, on the day before the election came a bold statement from Faisal Hussein, the unofficial leader of Palestinian Jerusalem, that the new Palestinian Authority would appoint a "governor" for the Jerusalem District as the Authority has appointed governors for all the other liberated towns on the West Bank. This caused anger and outrage in Israel which claims the city of Jerusalem as its exclusive, eternal capital, because a Palestinian governor appointed to oversee the affairs of the liberated villages in the Jerusalem District could be a first step towards the reversion of Palestinian rule over the eastern sector of the city captured and illegally annexed by Israel in 1967. Furthermore, Faisal Hussein insists that, when the final status negotiations open in May, the entirety of Jerusalem, Jewish West Jerusalem and Palestinian East Jerusalem, will become the subject of negotiation.

On the day after the elections, Mahmoud Abbas ("Abu Mazen"), head of the Palestine Election Commission, proclaimed that the newly elected 88-member Council will declare independence for Palestine during its first three year term. Getting his timing somewhat muddled, Mr. Abbas also said that the election of the Council "has brought us five minutes from independence." Thus, confirming that the most significant fact about the election was the election itself and also confirming the opinion of a Palestinian observer: "We vote therefore we exist." The vote in and by itself has given the Palestinians a new sense of self-reliance. As the ambassador of the PLO to London, Afif Safieh, claimed, "The event of the election is more important than the content of the

election."

The one factor that, above all, led to Mahmoud Abbas's self-confidence and predictions is that a very important, intangible but slightly mysterious element known as "legitimacy" conferred by the simple act of dropping into a closed receptacle a piece of paper with a name or symbol on it.

In the Arab-Israeli situation "legitimacy" could cut two ways. It could make life more difficult for the Israelis by adding to the boldness and courage of the Palestinians who are realising that, de facto and de jure, they are now in charge of their own destiny, but it will also add to the problems of Mr. Arafat in dealing with his hitherto subservient and obedient Palestinian citizens who now know that, unlike previously, when he, more or less, appointed himself as their leader and they accepted his decision, it is now they, the people, who have put him into authority as their leader.

Likewise the Israelis will have to realise that it is going to be very different dealing with Mr. Arafat

as a self-appointed chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO and Mr. Arafat as the elected President of the Palestine National Council.

As one travels through the new Palestinian self-rule areas in Ramallah, Jericho or Bethlehem, one can almost feel the old Israeli unchallenged dominance slipping out of the picture, aided, ironically enough, by denunciations from Israeli right-wingers confirming that this "terrible" development is indeed happening to the Jewish state. Aided too, by claims from other Israeli hardliners that "we will return" to Ramallah, Jericho and Bethlehem, thus acknowledging that they have given up areas of the West Bank, the heartland of the land given to them by their God Yahweh: an act of defiance and disobedience forced on them by their Palestinian enemy and the international community.

For hardline Zionist Israelis this must be a very dispiriting and disturbing time when old certainties are being overturned.

One very clear indication of

slipping Israeli dominance, even in their "eternal, undivided capital" is that foreign leaders insist on meeting the Palestinian local leaders in Orient House, the PLO headquarters in the city, despite vigorous Israeli protests against such visits. The French and the Dutch foreign ministers have recently made such visits and the European Union Troika of the foreign ministers of Ireland, Italy and Spain visited Orient House on Monday. These count as moves towards sharing Jerusalem between Israel and the future Palestinian state, an offer made by the PLO but spurned by Israel. The Palestinian ambassador to the U.K. stated the plain fact when, following the elections he declared: "We have reassessed our presence in Jerusalem."

This fact was confirmed by the Dutch foreign minister who just a week before the elections took place stated that his country considered East Jerusalem part of "occupied territory" and by the Irish foreign minister, speaking 48 hours after the poll, who said that the status of Jerusalem had to be settled in such a way as to be acceptable to "both parties," that is the Palestinians as well as Israel, making it clear that Europe does not recognise Israel's unilateral annexation of the city.

And if the old Israeli physical dominance in the territories is waning so too is the political dominance of Mr. Arafat over the Palestinians who live there. Although he secured 88 per cent of the vote in the presidential election and his candidates took all but a dozen seats in the 88-seat Council, it is expected that the fact that they have been given a mandate from the people will make them more independent of Mr. Arafat and more responsive to the demands of their constituents than Mr. Arafat's appointees have done. Dr. Ghassan Khatib, a leading Jerusalem analyst, believes it will take some time but the new Council members will eventually use the powers the election has given them. "Democracy," he said, "will come after a year or two."

LETTERS

Report unreflective of realities

To the Editor:

THE JORDAN Times on Monday (Jan. 22, 1996) published a Jordan News Agency (Petra) report entitled "ICRC Gives Clean Bill of Health to Kingdom's Juvenile Delinquent Reformatory Centres" on its Home News page. The article presented a report on a meeting held Sunday, 21. 1. 1996, between Head of the ICRC Delegation in Amman Yves Giovannoni and Public Security General Director Lt General Abdul Rahman Al Adwan. We would like to draw your attention to the fact that the report did not properly reflect the content and purpose of the meeting and, therefore, we wish to make the following clarifications:

Mr. Giovannoni has been in Jordan for over 18 months now, heading up the ICRC Delegation, which, amongst its various other humanitarian activities, carries out regular visits to detention places in Jordan pursuant to an agreement between the authorities of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and in accordance with the ICRC's humanitarian mandate. ICRC delegates have since 1979 been visiting detainees held at the various detention places. Their visits have followed standard ICRC procedures, i.e. they freely interview all detainees without witnesses and without time limit in their place of detention. The purpose of these visits is to essentially assess the material conditions of detention and the treatment of the detainees.

The ICRC usually writes confidential reports on its findings only to the concerned authorities and does not publish them, but reserves the right for itself to publish the full text of the reports in case the concerned authorities publish incomplete parts or different versions of the report. Likewise, the ICRC only excep-

tionally resorts to public statements in view of discharging its duties.

As an expression of the continuing good relations between the ICRC and the PSD, and in view of the latter's interest in humanitarian issues, the head of the ICRC Delegation, Mr. Giovannoni, paid a courtesy visit to Lt. General Adwan Sunday and only briefly discussed the recent ICRC visits.

Therefore, we were astonished at the contents of the Petra report, as published in the Jordan Times, particularly since most of the topics mentioned — like visits to the juvenile centres — were never discussed. As a matter of fact, Lt. General Adwan was recontacted today after the publication of the article in the press and expressed his surprise at the quality of the report.

We wish to seize this opportunity to praise the close ties of cooperation between the ICRC and the Jordan News Agency (Petra), the Jordan Times and the other news media in Jordan.

Mu'in Kassas,
Press and Information Official,
ICRC Office
Amman.

Editor's note: It is precisely because the Jordan Times cannot assume responsibility for content in news agency reports that it insists on including a by-line at the top of each story. We do check content in reports, we edit and rewrite where and when possible, depending on resources available to this newspaper. But when that happens the by-line is changed, as is clearly evident to our readers.

Occurred To Me

By Ali Kassay Blistering blizzards

Jordan, as everyone knows, is a land of sunshine. For eight months every year, the sun gently caresses the hillsides with its golden rays, almost uninterrupted by the slightest wisp of a cloud, offering perfectly clement weather for picnics, barbecues, and other such improving and invigorating outdoor activities. However, people also need water. Every year in Jordan, as if by ritual, the rains take too long to come. There passes a weary time, each throat is parched and glazed each weary eye. The anguished farmers, with the rest of the population behind them, start praying for rain. Eventually, in answer to these ardent supplications, the Compassionate and Merciful God sends us rain, and, as if by common accord, the whole country comes to a standstill.

The first drizzle brings a glimmer of hope to the farmers, that the harvest may yet be salvaged. It also brings disgruntlement to the rest of the population as the telephones cease to function.

As the gentle spray develops into a shower, the rural population utters prayers of thanks for God's munificence. City dwellers, on the other hand, fold up and go home because the power has failed and there is no prospect in the foreseeable future of switching on an electric light bulb, to say nothing of a personal computer.

Should the thirsty population be further blessed with heavy rain, the streets become awash with the overflow from the sewers, manhole covers come off their moorings, and the boulevards of the capital become virtually impassable rivers. The only place where water becomes scarce is, ironically enough, in the taps.

Finally, comes the annual forecast of snow, and the whole population takes leave of its senses and starts hoarding food in quantities sufficient to withstand a protracted siege. Notice, it takes not actual snow, but the suspicion of it to bring the country to a standstill. A year ago in December the University was shut, schools closed, and Parliament suspended its debates, then, lo and behold, no blizzard manifested itself, and everybody felt a bit silly.

Should the snow actually start to fall, pandemonium prevails, particularly on the roads. Drivers are all gripped by panic and they proceed to drive at a snail's pace, with their hazard lights flashing, to make sure that other motorists have no inkling which way they want to turn. Motor cars, poorly maintained at the best of times, fail to start or fall apart altogether, and refuse to negotiate the slightest climb. Taxis disappear from the streets. Shops close.

On these occasions, the whole population of Jordan has but one thought on its collective mind: To go home, barricade all doors and windows, and remain within until the sun shines again. Then, putting thought into action, the citizenry moves with such firm resolution and unity of purpose that, were it channelled into constructive endeavour, it would achieve miracles for Jordan's socio-economic recovery and sustainable growth.

All of which leads me to think about the national campaign to combat desertification. Are we sure that it is a good idea after all? I mean, given the way we behave when there is the slightest hint of moisture in the atmosphere, maybe aridity is a blessing in disguise.

Society on the Move

Changes and exchanges can do a world of good

HRH Prince Raad Bin Zeid left for Israel Wednesday to pay a reciprocal visit to Dr. Nurit Noi of Ilan, the Israeli Organisation for the Disabled. Dr. Noi, who was in Jordan last fall, visited several of the Kingdom's institutions which address the needs of the disabled. Prince Raad, who is chairman of the Jordan Sports Federation for the Handicapped as well as the Friendship Association for the Blind is expected to spend two days in Israel visiting counterpart institutions and meeting with principals working in the same and similar areas of concern. With the signing of the final agreements on bilateral cooperation in line with the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, many more such reciprocal visits are expected in various spheres of common interest.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER: It has been a little more than a year since Jordan has had an ambassador in Iran, but last week Sheikh Nuh Ali Salman Al Qudah was appointed as the Kingdom's new envoy to Tehran. Born in Ain Jara in Ajloun in 1939, Sheikh Nuh earned his bachelors degree in Islamic theology at Damascus University, a masters in comparative Islamic law from Al Azhar University in Cairo in 1980, and his Ph.D. from the University of Mohammad Bin Saud in Riyadh in 1986. He joined the Jordan Armed Forces in 1965 and was appointed as mufti in 1972. When he retired as a major general in 1992, Sheikh Nuh was appointed chief Islamic justice until he retired in 1993. His appointment as ambassador to the Islamic republic is his first diplomatic posting. Married with 10 children, Sheikh Nuh succeeds Ambassador Yassin Istanbuli who was posted as ambassador to Pakistan. Sheikh Nuh has been awarded several medals and has been decorated numerous times. Ties between Iran and Jordan have been doing well, save for an incident late last year when an Iranian diplomat was expelled from the Kingdom. But as if to play down the incident, Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said the envoy was not expelled but declared "persona non grata."

TOWARD GREENER PASTURES? Moving further eastward also, but heading for the balmy airs of Singapore is the Wall Street Journal's Middle East correspondent, Peter Waldman. In Amman for the past two years, after a two-year stint in London, and prior to that, in Jerusalem, Waldman says he found Jordan to be a "terrific base" because of the easy access to other countries, a "great airline," all the embassies you need, and people with useful information. He and his wife Charene Zalis,

who has been freelancing as a television producer [primarily for the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) in the U.S.] were delighted to set up house in Amman's First Circle district. Amman will always be special to them for one other reason, their daughter Jenna was born here. It is Waldman's fifth city in 10 years with the WSJ, and he says it has been as delightful as any of the others, and the friends he made here became as close as others he met in the U.S., Europe and elsewhere in the Middle East. The couple's only disappointment was the lack, in the capital, of open and green spaces and parks for 15-month-old Jenna to romp in. In Singapore, where Waldman will take on the post of southern Asia correspondent, the Waldman-Zalis family will await the arrival of a second baby due in July. The family leaves in early February. Waldman says he feels very hopeful for Jordan in that he believes the country is "ready to reap benefits of its position out here." We wish them a safe journey and a healthy new baby!

REWARDS IN SERVICE: It was more than hope that young Abdel Raheem Yousef received from the Rotary Club of Amman Cosmopolitan. The eight-year-old family approached club president Wa'el Karadsheh to see what could be done to help them with financial assistance to pay for a badly-needed eye operation for Abdel Raheem. The club was informed of the family's difficulty and quickly sought a way to help. Russian Ambassador to Jordan Alexander Salтанov, an active Rotarian, contacted his government and arranged to have Abdel Raheem operated on in his country. But soon afterwards Dr. Ziad Sharafiah, another member, identified a specialist in Jordan, Dr. Bakri Bitar, who performed the surgery on Abdel Raheem at the Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery in Amman. The surgery, reports the Cosmopolitan members, was a success, and they say they were happy to have been able to help, especially since they hold their motto, "Service Above Self," as a reward in itself.

RIGHTS FROM STAGE RIGHT: If you have ever seen a Nabil & Hisham Theatre performance you know that no one is immune to their portrayals. So be prepared for their newest political comedy, "Ahlam Hukuk Insani" — a genuine jab at human rights issues centred primarily on the Middle East. In a mixed bag of seven skits: women's rights; political rights; social rights and religious tolerance take centre stage with an ever-alternat-



Rotary Club of Amman Cosmopolitan President Wa'el Karadsheh launches the club's latest community service project: Prevention of Car Accidents and Protection of Schoolchildren, at a recent club meeting in Amman. Also on the podium are club members Alexander Salтанov, the Russian Ambassador to Jordan, and Retired General Shafik Jumean

ing cast of characters playing sometimes daring parts including Benazir Bhutto listing some kinky demands for women's rights, an Iranian mullah and an Arab Sheikh comparing notes, the Pope and Yasser Arafat meeting after the Palestinian elections, and a family from Salt who immigrated to the U.S. to avail themselves of new freedoms. There is even a scene in which the actors play out a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak asking about their rights as Arab leaders. Here we find Mr. Mubarak citing the assassination attempt against him and the attacks he suffers from the media. Actress Amal Dabbas, the only woman in the company, keeps you riveted on her character, whoever she is,

waiting for the next punch line or facial contortion. To the theatre team, led by Nabil Sawalha and Hisham Yonis, bringing this new show to the after iftar patrons at the Regency Palace Hotel, was taking a chance. They say this was truly the first time they were anxious about the humour and how the skits would be received by their audiences. But judging from the roars of laughter on opening night Tuesday, from a clearly wide-spectrum of the society, Ahlam Hukuk looks like a new hit.

Jennifer Hamarneh.

U.S. policy and new tensions

Crisis In The Arabian Gulf: An Independent Iraqi View
By Omar Ali
Praeger Press, Westport, CT, 1993; 154 pages.

Omar Ali's sobering new study of the Gulf War is obviously aimed at American readers. This fine book, which was a labour of love, was researched and written in the hope of elevating the pitifully low level of awareness here at home about how U.S. foreign policy, rather than being a force for stability and peace abroad, so often perpetuates old tensions and even creates new ones. Let us hope Americans in significant numbers will avail themselves of Ali's careful scholarship.

The book is well documented and systematically presented. The author adroitly covers a wealth of detail with regard to the background of the war. For example, Ali thoroughly reviews how Kuwait exacerbated long-simmering differences with Iraq by its decision to ignore its OPEC oil production quota and flood the world market with cheap oil. This move had a devastating effect on the Iraqi economy, because at the time Iraq was in debt to Kuwait and other Gulf states to the tune of a whopping \$40 billion as a result of its previous war with Iran. Iraq also was under intense pressure from Kuwait to repay the loans, and so was in desperate need of revenue from its own oil fields. Iraq therefore felt squeezed by Kuwaiti overproduction. Every dollar lost to Iraq per barrel due to the Kuwaiti-caused glut was costing the country an estimated \$1 billion in badly needed income. Not that this explanation justifies Iraqi aggression, far from it; but such details do shed light on how the Gulf crisis developed.

Though English is the author's adopted tongue, not his first language, Crisis In The Arabian Gulf is a very read-

able account. In fact, considering the wide gap between English and Arabic, the book is a considerable achievement. Beyond this, the book deserves wide attention, because its unstated theme is a warning which Americans need to bear: That the Gulf War was not an aberration. Given the tremendous wealth and power involved with the politics of oil, the recent disaster is likely to reconstitute itself in some new form and be repeated sometime in the future, if the lessons of history are not absorbed.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence, judging from U.S. policy following the war, that the lessons have been learned. Cast in the light of Ali's scholarship, the Gulf War and aftermath, far from ushering in a New World Order, mostly resembles the familiar old pattern of outside interference that has characterised Middle East history for centuries. For instance, following the defeat of the Iraqi army, the allied forces all but insured that victory would not bring lasting peace, by ignoring legitimate long-standing Iraqi grievances regarding its border with Kuwait. Had the allies been interested in securing a lasting peace, they would have referred the border problem, which is really a legal question, to the International Court of Justice. Instead, they attempted to impose a settlement favouring Kuwait through Security Council resolutions, i.e. shades of former colonial rule again rearing its ugly head.

How unfortunate that the U.S. media never questioned this matter of a just border settlement following the war! Because the border which the allies chose to install was the same line arbitrarily drawn in the sand in 1932 by Britain during the colonial period. In fact, that line is but one more example of the regrettable legacy of conflict left behind by Britain in its empire's wake. Surely, the United States must have known that Iraq, though forced to swallow unfavourable terms as a result of losing the war, ultimate-

ly will never be able to accept the present boundary. As Ali shows, any cursory reading of past Middle East history demonstrates as much. Rather than peace, therefore, the allied intent appears to have been the same as colonial Britain's: To keep Iraq landlocked, weak, and in perpetual conflict with its neighbours. In other words, the allied strategy was the familiar colonial "divide and conquer".

Along similar lines, Ali touches frequently on another major theme, the conspiracy theory widely held throughout the Arab World. According to this view, the United States actually enticed Saddam Hussein to invade Kuwait to create a pretext to destroy Iraq's growing military (and nuclear) power, and industrial infrastructure. Though Ali presents no hard evidence, the idea of a covert U.S. agenda certainly is plausible. And it is supported by much circumstantial evidence. The conspiracy view explains a number of puzzling questions, such as why the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, failed to warn Saddam Hussein about the fatal consequences of aggression. Moreover, why did the United States fail to act at the U.N. Security Council in the crucial eleventh hour to abort the Iraqi invasion? The U.S. surely knew that Iraq was prepared to use force if the negotiations with Kuwait failed. Saddam Hussein had informed Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak of the fact, information that Mubarak surely passed to his U.S. benefactors. Also, with orbiting satellite hardware in place with resolution capability sufficient to read a car licence plate from space, U.S. intelligence must have known that Saddam's troops were massing on the Kuwaiti border. In fact, it's a safe bet that President George Bush was getting detailed hourly reports at the time regarding Iraqi military developments. Yet when the negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait broke down, with arrogant taunting of Iraq by the Kuwaiti crown prince, instead of taking

steps at the Security Council to dampen the crisis, the U.S. curiously bided its time. And predictably, Saddam blundered into the trap.

Consistent with his internationalist perspective, the author is highly critical of U.S. policy, but he is no supporter of Saddam Hussein. Ali is a democrat whose message is that the only cure for the Middle East is more democracy, not less. The author argues — in my view persuasively — that the war would never have happened if democratic institutions had been functioning in Iraq; because no democratically elected Iraqi leader would have been able to generate public support for a war policy. According to Ali, most Iraqis were tired of war, having just experienced a long and bloody conflict with Iran, and did not back Saddam's invasion of Kuwait. The real tragedy in the author's view is that despite Washington's rhetoric, U.S. policy in the region has never supported democracy, an analysis well documented by history, both past and recent. For example, though a chief objective of the Gulf War was the liberation of Kuwait, today that state, which comes close to being a vassal fiefdom of the U.S., remains as undemocratic as ever. Clearly, U.S. leaders have decided that U.S. interests are best served by backing tyranny rather than democracy, a brutal truth that does not augur well for the future of the region, as elsewhere. This is one book that should be read by every Middle East scholar and every citizen interested in rectifying U.S. foreign policy.

In fact, my only criticism of Crisis In The Arabian Gulf is its steep price (\$49). Readers may need to access this important book through their local libraries.

Mark Gaffney

BOOK REVIEW

Happy New Year!.... But which year?

It is a well-established custom and ritual to wish those close to us a happy New Year and to celebrate the end of the old year and make new resolutions for the coming year. All civilisations and all cultures have their celebrations and, as each country has its own "official time," a carefully organised flight around the world would enable a curious traveller to see the New Year in and hear midnight strike 24 times in different places, as that is the traditional way of passing over from Dec. 31 to Jan. 1.

By Wilma Levy

PARIS — Each New Year celebrates a clearly established cosmic event, the completion of a new revolution of the Earth around the sun. But that is just the theory. In reality, it is far more complex. We are not in a stadium where the starting and finishing lines are clearly and materially marked, and, owing to problems of reference points, nobody really has the same calendar.

Let us consider matters from the point of view of an astronomer to begin with, and see how much time passes for the Earth to return to an imaginary line linking the sun

to another reference star. This would be the sidereal year, which is 365 days, 6 hours, 9 minutes and 10 seconds long. That would be perfect if the Earth's orbit was circular, which is obviously not the case.

Let us now examine the situation from the point of view of a mathematician. The distance separating the Earth from the sun is approximately 147 million kilometres in January and 152 million kilometres in July. The anomalistic year, which measures the time it takes the Earth to return to the point nearest to the sun, is then 365 days, 6 hours, 13 minutes and 53 seconds.

Finally, let us see the problem from a geographer's point of view. He would observe the return of Phoebe, influenced by the cycle of the seasons, back to the same point in the Zodiac belt. This is the tropical year and lasts 365 days, 5 hours, 28 minutes and 46 seconds.

There are thus three methods of calculation, producing three different results, and all of them are valid. It is an interesting problem, but a little embarrassing when it comes to choosing.

Moreover, this hesitation marks the history of calendars. The Romans had their calendar begin on March 1. The Christians chose December 25 (the date established, in 337, by Pope Julius I as the day of Christ's birth), or the March 25 which is the day of the Annunciation to Mary. The Muslims prefer to begin with the day on which Mohammed left Mecca for Medina. In 1564, the King of France, Charles

IX, fixed the beginning of the official year at January 1. The Revolutionaries, who introduced the republican calendar, chose the autumn equinox as the beginning of the year.

A second dilemma faced the many creators of calendars. The "scientific" year (whatever one it is) does not include a number of complete days. Indeed, the Earth's rotation (on its own axis) is independent from its revolution (its movement around the sun). Hence it is impossible to imagine an unchanging succession of years made up of the same number of days. A similar problem arises for those who wanted to base their calculations on the phases of the moon. So what could be done?

The Israeli calendar takes into account both the sun and the moon. It alternates years which can have twelve or thirteen months, that is to say from 353 to 385 days, so as to create an "average" month equivalent to a lunation and an "average" year close to a tropical year.

The Muslim calendar, however, is fundamentally lunar. Its average year has 354.37 days. A cycle of thirty years thus contains 19 years having 354 days and 11 years with 355 days.

The Gregorian calendar, which is the one used in most Western countries, is strictly solar and was created in such a way as to ensure the closest concordance, over a long period, between official years and tropical years. That is why, in 1582, Pope Gregory XIII reformed the ratio of leap years to ordinary years and the difference (today number-

ing 13 days) between this new calendar and the Julian system, which is in use in Orthodox countries, appeared.

When counting the years, the most widespread calendar begins Year One on the first of January following the presumed date of the birth of Christ, while knowing full well that the margin of error for determining that year is estimated at +/- 4 years. The year before is considered as "Year One Before Christ." Although this system may satisfy most people, it does not meet with the approval of scientists for whom it is not possible to pass from -1 to 1. Already in 1770, Cassini advocated that "-1" should become "0" and that hence "-2" should become "-1".

As the scientific journalist Albert Ducrocq points out "the standardisers finally came along to put their word in. The International Standards Organisation proposed a standard ISO calendar to establish the days, months and years." So the out-going year began on the 19.940.101st day. As the first week of the year began in the week which had the first Thursday in January, for the ISO, there were 52 weeks in 1994 and there will be the same number in 1995. However, there will be 53 weeks a year if the year begins on a Thursday, or a Wednesday in the case of a leap year.

Does that sound rather complicated? It may be true, but science cannot content itself with certainties which seem obvious to us. But do not let those few minutes or days gleaned from time stop you from enjoying a very happy New Year — L'Actualité En France.

Unsolved incompatibilities

By Jean-Claude Elias

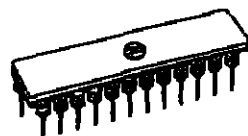
One of the most annoying aspects of new technologies is the lack of compatibility between the different equipment and software standards. The infamous fight between the VHS and Betamax video tape formats is still hurting. Since their early inception in the world of consumer video, VHS and Betamax have made life unpleasant to all those who wanted to share or copy tapes. Different VCR machines were also needed to operate the two formats. Now VHS seems to have won the battle, after it took its toll of victims.

The world of PCs is rich in similar examples. If MS-DOS and Windows now dominate the market of operating systems (OS), followed by Apple's Macintosh System 7, more than six OS were vying for leadership in the early eighties. Users of personal computer were "treated" to a variety of keyboard layouts, Arabic standards, printing protocols, not to mention half a dozen disk recording formats.

In the beginning of this year things look a little brighter than before, on most fronts though not on all. The number of leading Word Processing programmes, by far the most widely used type of software, has been reduced to practically two. A large number of software manufacturers have adopted the Windows standard, and users can even perform easy file exchange between the IBM-compatible machines and the Macintosh. Many of the hardware components are now able, without noticeable problem, to "talk to each other" to put it in computer jargon.

If the general trend is towards more compatibility, how come manufacturers can still imagine creating new conflicts? Four companies, two on each side of the ring, are developing the next CD-ROM standard. Sony-Phillips and Warner-Toshiba will soon introduce a super, high-

chip talk



capacity computer laser disc. Whereas the current disc can hold an average 700 MB (million bytes or characters), the new format will be able to store five times more information, with faster access to data. The application is critical for quality images and video stored on CD-ROM. A current CD-ROM can't store more than a few minutes of quality motion pictures. The high-capacity disc will allow us to watch a complete movie on computer. The problem is that the two sides do not agree on the technical specifications.

The implications of the new CD-ROM format are enormous. The same media will be used in PCs and in the future video recorders. It will probably transform both our computing habits and the way we use home video. Having two standards would create havoc like VHS and Betamax did before. This time however, the consequences could be much worse. Already consumer groups in the United States are talking to the developers urging them to come to a common agreement on technical characteristics. Everybody would benefit from such an alliance.

In the meantime, and for the zillionth time, we users, ask the same unanswered question: What is going to happen to us?

Start of an epic journey

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen

I came across a folded piece of paper in my wallet the other day while I was looking for somebody's card. It was, or at least I thought it was, one of those messages you find tucked away within the pieces of Swiss chocolate, or something similar, that you get handed at some fancy party. Anyway, what it said was this: "Hide me inside you, where the sweetest things are hidden, between the roots of roses and spices."

And ever since then, these words have been coming back to me over and over again. For certainly, the sweetest things inside each and every one of us are hidden, yet waiting to be discovered, because the things that we normally do are eventually tempered by ourselves, our friends, our families, and our society.

For it is an accepted feature of human beings to do some of the things that we as people do, sometimes because we want to, while at other times because of our belief that that is what others would like us to do, or simply imply that we should do. Through a constant barrage of hints and harassment, no doubt.

It is also in our nature, however much we would like to think otherwise, to pay attention to what others think that we should do. But above everything else, we have to realise that while respecting what others say and keeping in mind how they feel about things, it remains most important that we be sure how we ourselves feel about and where we stand as far as the things that happen in our lives and the people we come across are concerned.

This is why it becomes important to be able to take a break every now and then in order to be in a healthier and more enabling state of mind. Think of it as a way of gaining a fresh perspective.

And while some of the things that we do and that ultimately

begin to define who we are, things such as writing, remain a part of a vicious circle where some people write but where not that many people show an interest in what is actually being communicated, the knowledge that some people actually read and care is in itself fulfilling. And there can be no doubt about that. And these are not meant to be comforting words, although no doubt they are, they are meant to encourage those who would like to put pen to paper in order to communicate a message or several messages.

More than anything, and in order to be very clear about things in one's head, an escapist option probably remains the better solution. Escape not in the sense of running away, but in the sense of getting away from things in order to step back, take a deep breath, and look at matters from the point of view of an outsider. If this is possible at all. Or maybe just look at things from a distance.

Maybe we all need to go through such a process of spiritual transformation every now and then in order to be rid of the ghosts of a past that is just that, plain and simple: A past. A past that is there to be learnt from, there to help us focus on the present and plan for the future. To plan each according to his or her priorities. To plan with faith and hope in a simple idea that any two people, and once they have managed to see eye to eye, could find a common ground where they can meet.

And in order to be able to focus, journeys are necessary if one is to break free, if only for a while, from the crushing routines and mishaps of life in a city like Amman. To get away from the rush for the green traffic light and away from the traffic warden perched on top of a bridge waiting to catch the next unsuspecting speeding driver. Away from the constant back-stabbing and mindless nagging. But also, heartbreakingly, away from those people that are most important to a person.

AMAZING FACTS

* BORN 14th March, 1829, Charles Charlesworth of Staffordshire died seven years later — of old age. From the very day he was born, he began to age rapidly and by the age of four, he was a fully developed man with a beard. At five his beard was white and his face lined and wizened, his hands gnarled and knotted, he needed a stick to hobble around. By the age of six he was bent and shaking like an old man in his seventies, at seven he died of a heart attack. Charles Charlesworth's body had crammed a life span of three score years and ten into just seven.

* BILLED as "a New Science Man" 30 years old Francis Lambert, of Suffolk, was on exhibition in 1820 in New Bond Street, London, showing the scales which covered his body from his neck to his feet.

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

** Pity me!
Ashfiq alayya!

** It's odious!
Ma aqbaahu!

** It's a heart-rending sight.
Hatha amron tatafattat lahu akbad.

** It cannot be helped.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By: Mohammad A. Shuqair

Ma bil'yad heela.
Ya ilmunseeba!

Hatha amalun khasis.

Ma askhaf ma taqool!

Ya il'aaar!

Ma ashqaq!

La smahal'lah!

Ya il'khasara!

Ruhmaka Rabbi!

JOKES

* TEACHER: Your composition subject about the "dog" is just like your brother's Nabil. Why?

PUPIL: "Because we have the same dog."

* FATHER: Why doesn't your cousin forget his lesson so quickly like you?
SON: His house is close to school but ours is too far!

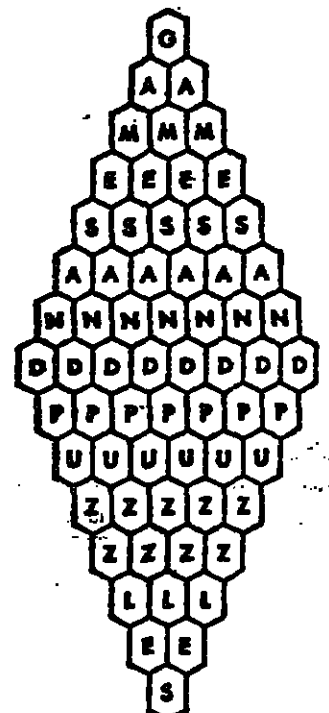
BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. What is a "fool's gold"?
2. To which English queen is the following attributed?

"When I am dead and opened, you shall find 'Calais' lying in my heart."
3. Which prehistoric animal is related to the elephant?
4. In World War II, who was known as "Lord Haw-Haw"?
5. In the French Revolution, who were the Mountain and the Plain?
6. From what tree do we get the fruit known as conkers?
7. If a king abdicates, what does he do?
8. Why is Thailand sometime called the land of the "Yellow Robe"?

PUZZLES

LOOK at this diagram. Start at the G and see how many different ways there are of spelling out GAMES AND PUZZLES. In spelling this out, you are only allowed to move to a letter adjacent to the previous one. Of course, if two ways of spelling out GAMES AND PUZZLES differ by only one letter, you must still count them as two ways. Start counting!



JTV CHANNEL TWO WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, Jan. 25, 1996

1:00 Fireman Sam
1:15 The Legends Of Treasure Islands
1:45 My Secret Identity
2:02 NBA
3:05 The New Leave It To Beaver
3:30 Adventures Of The Old West
4:30 Gillette World Sport Special
5:00 French Programme
Sophie Et Virginie
5:30 Varieties
Le Monde Est A Vous
7:00 Le Journal
7:15 Magazine
Archimede
7:30 News Headlines
7:35 Carol And Company
8:00 Magazine 01 (Documentary)
8:15 The Album Show
9:10 Miami Vice
10:00 News In English
10:25 Feature Film — North Beach And Raw Hide
Starring: William Shanter & Tate Donovan
12:00 Matlock

Friday, Jan. 26, 1996

1:00 The Little Mermaid
1:30 Irish-The Happy Professor
1:45 Bush School
2:00 See How They Grow
2:15 Lift Off
2:35 Super Carrier
3:20 Goldrush In Alaska
4:05 Wondery Why
4:30 Give Us A Clue
5:00 French Programme
Sophie Et Virginie
5:30 Film
Tempetes
7:00 Le Journal
7:15 Magazine
Allo La Ferre
7:30 News Headlines
7:35 Short Story Cinema
8:00 Sea Quest
8:45 America's Funniest People
9:10 Widows (Ep. 4)
10:00 News In English
10:25 Second Chances (Drama)

11:30 Classic Movie — Pillow Talk
Starring: Rock Hudson & Doris Day

Saturday, Jan. 27, 1995

2:00 Moomins
2:30 Wish Kid
3:00 Harry And The Hendersons
3:25 Blue Healers
4:00 Voyagers
5:00 Children's Programme
Ordy
5:15 Children Programme
Cupido
5:30 Serie
Les Compagnons De L'Aventure
6:00 Serie
Chateau Vallon
7:00 Le Journal
7:15 Magazine
Faut Pas Rever
7:30 News Headlines
7:35 Major Dad
8:00 Stamp Of Greatness
8:25 Hawaii Five-O
9:10 A Fine Romance (Drama Ep 1)
10:00 News In English
10:25 A Journey Across The Land Of Islam
10:45 Feature Film — Crystal Heart
Starring: Lloyd Bochner & Simon Andrea
11:50 Mancuso FBI

Sunday, Jan. 28, 1996

2:00 The Flintstones
2:30 Droopy Master Detective
3:00 Family Playhouse
3:30 Islamic History In Jordan
4:00 Voyagers
5:00 Children's Programme
Ordy
5:15 Children's Programme
Cupido
5:30 Serie
Les Compagnons De L'Aventure
6:00 Magazine
Envoye Spencial
7:00 Le Journal
7:15 Magazine

7:30 Sports Et Musique
7:35 News Headlines
8:00 Are You Being Served
8:05 Oriental Rugs
8:25 Hawaii Five-O
9:10 Cinema, Cinema
9:30 Women Of The World
10:00 News In English
10:25 Counterstrike
11:15 The American Chart Show
12:00 Say Lucky

Monday, Jan. 29, 1996

2:00 Bonkers
2:30 Richie Rich
3:00 Playabout
3:15 Bustin' Loose
3:40 Animals Of The Mediterranean
4:00 Voyagers
5:00 Children's Programme
Ordy
5:15 Children's Programme
Cupido
5:30 Serie
Les Compagnons De L'Aventure
Magazine
C'Est Pas Sorcier
6:20 Family Programme
L'Ecole Des Fans
7:00 Le Journal
7:15 Magazine
Cinq Sur Cinq
7:30 News Headlines
7:35 McHale Navy
8:00 Invention
8:25 Hawaii Five-O
9:10 Russia — The Missing Years
"Russian Aviation" Part 2
10:00 News In English
10:25 A Journey Across The Land Of Islam
10:40 Perfect Scoundrels
11:10 Taurus Rising
12:00 Ellen

Tuesday, Jan. 30, 1996

2:00 Captain Planet
2:30 Jonny Quest

2:50 Spirit Of Adventure
3:40 Scientific Eye
4:30 Voyagers
5:00 French's Programme
Ordy
5:15 Children's Programme
Cupido
5:30 Serie
Les Compagnons De L'Aventure
6:00 Medical Magazine
Savoir Plus Sante
7:00 Le Journal
7:15 Magazine
Ushuaia
7:30 News Headlines
7:35 You Bet Your Life
8:00 Oriental Rugs
8:25 Hawaii Five-O
9:10 99-1 (Police Drama)
10:00 News In English
10:25 I'll Take Manhattan Ep. 8
11:15 Feature: "Prime Target"
Starring: David Heavener & Tony Curtis

Wednesday, Jan. 31, 1996

2:00 The Flintstones
2:30 Speed Racer
3:00 Islamic History In Jordan
3:30 Amazing Stories
4:00 Voyagers
5:00 Children's Programme
Sophie Et Virginie
5:30 Serie
Le Cascadeur
7:00 Le Journal
7:15 Magazine
Sports Et Musique
7:30 News Headlines
7:35 Evening Shade
8:00 Oriental Rugs
8:25 Hawaii Five-O
9:10 Horizon/Too Big, Too Soon
10:00 News In English
10:25 Prism
10:45 Airwolf
11:20 The Silk Road
12:30 Second Thoughts

With bravado, Saul Zaentz invests in literature

By Kate Dunn
PIENZA, Italy — In an olive grove beside an abandoned monastery, the film-makers are working their way towards the 23d take of a key scene in "The English Patient."

Juliette Binoche, as Hana, a Canadian nurse from an Allied medical unit, and Naveen Andrews as Kip, the Sikh bomb-disposal expert and Hana's lover, reach for a complex, delicate moment when they simultaneously defuse a bomb and have their first embrace.

This \$30 million movie, which will complete filming next month in Tunisia and will be released next year, also stars Ralph Fiennes ("Strange Days" and "Quiz Show") as the enigmatic English patient of the title; Willem Dafoe as an Italian-Canadian thief turned spy and Kristin Scott-Thomas as Katharine, the patient's lover before his plane crash.

The film is a risk for its producer, Saul Zaentz, a man whose pictures — including "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," "Amadeus" and "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" — have won 13 Oscars.

Zaentz, who is 73, is perhaps the last of the great independent producers. Other moviemakers admire his choice of subject and his bravado in using his own

money to make movies.

But his last outing, "At Play in the Fields of the Lord," in 1991, lost \$20 million. This time around he has \$5 million of his and his partners' money (Miramax put up the rest) invested in finding out whether a literary masterpiece like Michael Ondaatje's "The English Patient," which won England's Booker Prize in 1992, can turn a profit.

Right now, the scene on the hillside is not working. As the shadows cast by the Tuscan cedars grow longer, the director, Anthony Minghella, calls for another break. Behind him sits Zaentz, who has been credited with catching talent on the cusp of greatness, when he can still afford it. Binoche, who starred in Krzysztof Kieslowski's "Blue," proved to be one such catch in "The Unbearable Lightness of Being." Zaentz believes that Minghella is another.

The producer has the patience to wait through take after take for the scene to sort itself out. Rather than screaming at his director about schedules and budget when the action stops, he tells a little story.

"We were flying in a small plane in Brazil, looking for locations for 'At Play,'" he said. "It was 5:30 a.m. Hector Babenco, the film's

director, and everybody in back of the plane were sleeping. Then I looked up and saw in front that the pilot was asleep, too. After about 10 minutes, the pilot woke up by himself. He looked at me from the corner of his eye, worried. I didn't let on. He busied himself with the controls. We kept on course.

"Later, when I told the story, Hector said, 'Why didn't you do something?' I said: 'We were fine. But if it had looked like we were going to crash, I would have put my hands around his throat.'"

That story describes the way Zaentz works: certain he has hired the right talent, he gives them latitude. As if to illustrate the point, an exasperated Minghella jogs up the hills to talk to his producer. "It is going any better?"

The white-bearded Zaentz just nods and nods. Reassured, Minghella walks down the hill, pauses to take Binoche's hand and speaks quietly to her. He does the same to Andrews. A few more takes, and it's a wrap.

In an age in which successful movies are likely to be based on comic books, "The English Patient" represents the other extreme. Zaentz has money riding not only on a relatively untested director but on a period film, an anti-war story about

love and betrayal of individuals, ideals, nations and races. In "The English Patient," the ideas alone could make it a difficult film to pull off.

"The English Patient" is a very hard sell," said Minghella, who brought the book to Zaentz's attention after the producer called him in London to say how much he had liked "Truly, Madly, Deeply," a romantic ghost story written and directed by Minghella. "The English Patient" is too uncompromising for the amount of money it is taking to make. That's why Saul is one of only two or three producers in the world who could rustle up the money for it."

It's been an unlikely life for an ex-sailor from New Jersey who, at the end of World War II, intended to become a chicken farmer. Instead, Zaentz fell into the recording business in California. (He now lives in Berkeley.) In the 1960s his Fantasy Records label, known for jazz and the Creedence Clearwater Revival, made him a fortune.

Bored, he announced to his partners that he wanted to make films out of two '60s novels, "At Play in the Fields of the Lord," by Peter Matthiessen, and "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," by Ken Kesey. Shortly

thereafter he sent a copy of the Kesey novel to the Czech expatriate director Milos Forman.

"No major studio wanted to finance 'Cuckoo's Nest,'" Forman said by telephone from Los Angeles. "So he had to do it himself, and the film had to be cheap. I was a director whose work he respected, but I was still cheap because my first film, 'Taking Off,' in 1971 had been a flop."

A decade later, Forman told Zaentz that he should make a film of the play "Amadeus," their second Oscar-winning collaboration was born.

"Saul is the producer ideal because he realised that a film has to be made by one person, the director, not by committee," Forman said.

Minghella is a more recent convert. "Everything about Saul is beguiling if you're a filmmaker," he said, "because he has such courage and such confidence in the people he elects to work with."

Binoche saw a more grandfatherly side and appreciated the fact that he had the courtesy to leave the set during her nude scenes. "Saul is not there to control things but to give of himself," she said. "I need warmth and understanding, and Saul is there for that."

Zaentz said he was committed to "doing honour" to

modern literature through art films that attract picky artists like Binoche, Fiennes, Dafoe and the cinematographer John Seale, all working for less than what they would usually earn.

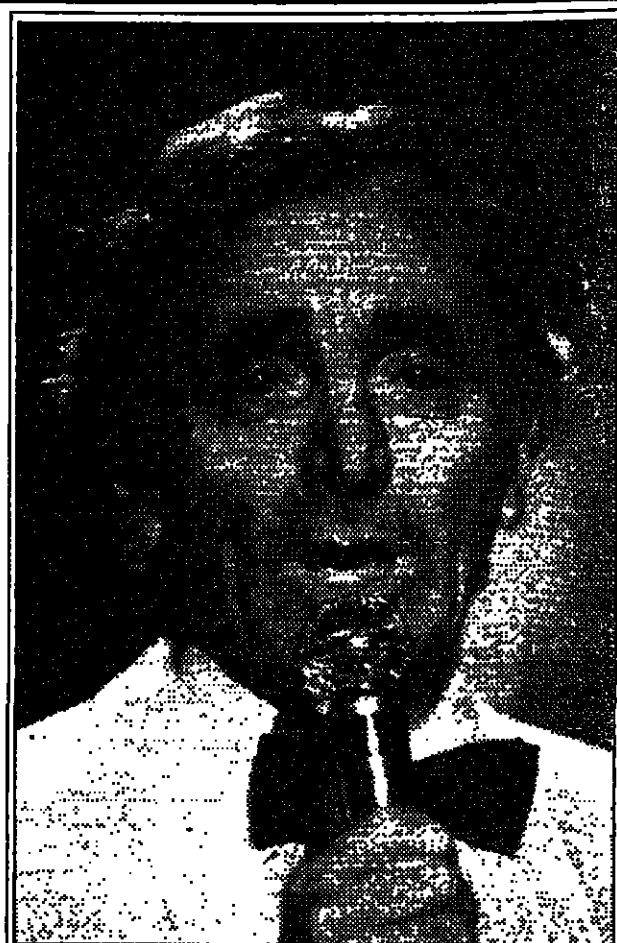
In the face of great art, he said, egos must be put aside: "As Ingmar Bergman said, actors have to get to the point where there's no you and there's no me. Not only the actors but everybody should think that way."

Novelists, too, trust Zaentz with their books. Minghella wrote the screen adaptation of "The English Patient" with substantial help from Ondaatje, a Canadian of Sri Lankan origin.

"It's been a wonderful collaboration," said Ondaatje of working with both Minghella and Zaentz. "I thought it would be, given the quality of Saul's other films made from books I love, including 'At Play.'"

These days Zaentz is scanning the bookshelves for his next project. The only requirement, he said, is that he and his director "must be equally passionate about the book we want to make into a film."

Fiennes summed him up this way: "Saul is extremely unusual in that he's hung onto a generosity of spirit in a murderous business" — The New York Times.



Charles Aznavour

Aznavour — the authentic troubadour

His appearance which was far from that of a young film star and his throaty voice did not make Charles Aznavour's path to fame easy. Today, after a career spanning 50 years, his songs are still timeless and his reputation worldwide.

By Karine Dubois

PARIS — Charles Aznavour, whose real name is Shanoun Aznavourian, was born in Paris in 1924 of Armenian parents. His father, who was a barytone singer and his mother, who was an actress, gave him a taste for the stage very early on.

At the age of 9, young Charles made his stage debut playing "Un Bon Petit Diable". That same year, he had his first taste of film-acting in the famous "Les Disparus De Saint-Agil".

He was not drawn to his studies but preferred the cosy atmosphere of theatre corridors. He was already driven by a single passion. It was one for writing. Later, at the Club De La Chanson, he met Pierre Roche, a young pianist and composer with whom he formed a duo.

His first songs were sung by other singers such as Chevalier, Mistinguett, Grégo and, above all, Piaf, who took him under her wing. In the space of a few years, as a journalist was to write, "France was totally Aznavourian". There was not a single singing tour in which at least one song by Aznavour did not figure.

Yet, although the lyricist was praised to the skies by the public and by critics, as a singer, he was scorned. His beginnings on the stage were catastrophic. This short, skinny man, with his veiled voice, was rejected and mocked.

And then, in 1953, he suddenly became a hit. In Casablanca, the spectators rose to their feet and even refused to let him leave. The echo of their applause resounded as far as Paris. Success calls for success and he was taken on at the Moulin Rouge. Bruno Coquatrix, the manager of the Olympia in Paris offered him a three-week contract in his music-hall in the first part of the Sidney Bechet Show. This was followed by a fabulous performance at the Alhambra. It was the consecration of a singer who, at the age of 30, became the no. 1 star in France.

At that time, the cinema also opened its doors to him. Between two shows, he acted in "La Tête Contre Les Murs", which won him the Académie Du Cinéma's Grand Prix for acting, in 1959. He also played in "Les Dragueurs", François Truffaut's "Tirez Sur Le Pianiste" and "Un Taxi Pour Tobrouk" with Lino Ventura, to mention but the most famous ones.

Public despair

In 1965, the singer who had reached the apex of his fame, appeared for twelve weeks at the Olympia, a performance which had never been achieved before. He became the symbol of a new realistic romanticism. His songs present ordinary people, completely common situations and painful experiences. Nobody before him had dared to sing the loneliness of a homosexual (in the song "Comme Ils Disent") or described the waning of the desire to please ("Tu Te Laisses Aller"), which led Cocteau to say: "Before Aznavour despair was unpopular."

The singer is acclaimed by the public, but he does not forget his difficult beginnings for all that. "I had seventeen flops, but I'm not complaining about that, on the contrary. And if I managed to become somebody, it is thanks to seventeen years of hard work."

His recitals take him all over the world. In 1963, he sang at the prestigious Carnegie Hall in New York. His tunes were taken up by the most prestigious international singers such as Frank Sinatra, Ray Charles and Plácido Domingo, not forgetting Liza Minelli.

Although he is fulfilled, that does not leave him insensitive to the problems of the world. Since the earthquake in Armenia in 1988, he has led a relentless fight with his association "Aznavour Pour L'Arménie". He has, moreover, received the title of permanent ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to UNESCO.

Aged over 70, this creator who is always bubbling over with artistic ideas, is starting on the complete edition of his works in a record collection called Aznavour L'Authentique. It is a fine opportunity to discover or rediscover "La Bohème", "Mourir D'Aimer", "Que C'est Triste Venise" and other eternal classics which are the treasures of the French cultural and popular heritage — L'Actualité En France.

Pavlova's ashes cause continuing controversy

By Jennifer Scott Reuter

AMSTERDAM — Nearly 65 years after her lonely death in a Dutch hotel room, Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova is still leading fans a merry dance.

After a rags-to-riches life marked by greed, exile and deceit, there appears to be little peace in death for the acclaimed dancer who immortalised Saint-Saëns' dying swan in 4,000 performances.

The controversy centres on her ashes, which have languished in a white marble urn for more than half a century in the north London suburb of Golders Green, near her British home.

Jean Thomassen, a Dutch painter and Pavlova fanatic, says he has discovered new

evidence that Pavlova's dying wish was to "return to her beloved Russia, after the Communists have fallen."

He portrays Pavlova as a tragic, exploited figure whose heart remained in Russia despite her capitalist beliefs and lifestyle.

But the absence of a will after her death in the Hague in 1931 has led to a protracted international battle for her ashes which has enmeshed the Russian and British embassies and even Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands.

In a new book drawing on what Thomassen says is previously unseen evidence from Dutch archives, the painter claims to identify the illegitimate Pavlova's father as a wealthy Jewish banker from St. Petersburg. He also claims conclusive

evidence that Pavlova's business manager and putative husband Victor Dandré was in fact never married to the ballerina.

"Dandré was a mafia gangster a crook and villain. His ashes lie under Anna's at the crematorium in Golders Green but they should be thrown in the bin," Thomassen said.

He depicts Dandré as a money-grabbing parasite who drove the ballerina to perform right to the end and who plundered her British bank accounts while she lay dying.

He even disputes the accuracy of Pavlova's famous alleged last words "prepare my swan costume".

"In fact Pavlova asked her private maid Margarite to bring her the designer dress she recently bought in Paris

and send it back for a refund so she could use the money for one of her orphanages," Thomassen says.

He recounts evidence from those who knew Pavlova personally of her wish to rest one day in Russia.

He points to her choice of cremation, which is strictly forbidden under the rules of the Russian Orthodox Church, as proof of the ballerina's desire to return to her place of birth.

"I'm sure Anna would have returned home to Russia earlier if she was not prevented from doing so by Dandré, who was forbidden from going back because of fraud charges there," Thomassen said.

But Harvey Thomas, a non-executive director of Golders Green

Crematorium, where Pavlova's ashes rest along with those of Sigmund Freud and actor Peter Sellers, said Thomassen's crusade was misguided.

"As far as we can see this 'last wish' of Anna's has never been documented," he said.

He says Pavlova's marital status is irrelevant, since Dandré was legally given power over her estate 65 years ago and at that time expressed the wish that the ashes should stay at Golders Green Crematorium indefinitely.

His will authorised trustees to "consent to the removal of the ashes of my wife...to Russia" if her honour and security could be assured — a fact Thomassen points to in his argument.

Delacroix and the light of the orient

A special event recently took place in Paris. The Arab World Institute (Institut du Monde Arabe) exhibited about a hundred works by Eugène Delacroix, to pay homage to the painter and to the visit that he made to Morocco in 1832. It is the first retrospective of Delacroix in the French capital, in sixty years. A sale, held after the artist's death in 1863, dispersed his works, which explains why the paintings on exhibition come not only from various countries in Europe, but also from the United States and Japan.

By Nelly Brunel

PARIS — "Delacroix returned from Morocco dazzled by light," wrote the painter Paul Signac, "and intoxicated by the harmonious and powerful vividness of oriental colours... And, since then, in his work, one would always find something of that radiant, sonorous and melodious Orient".

The painter made this journey thanks to Count Mornay who had been put in charge of a diplomatic mission, by King Louis-Philippe, with the Sultan Moulay Abdul Rahman and chose Delacroix as a travelling companion. At the time, he was aged 34 and is said to have led rather a sedentary life.

The Orient was in fashion, whether it was the Maghreb, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Persia or India. Delacroix discovered a completely different life there which, first of all, conjured up antiquity for him. Until then, the traditional visit to Italy had been a must for artists. "Just imagine," he wrote to a friend, "what it is like to see people resembling Roman Consuls, Caros or Brutuses, who do not even lack the disdaining air that the masters of the world should have, lying in the sun, walking in the streets or repairing shoes."

"I employ part of my time working with pleasure," he added, "and another considerable part of my time just enjoying living in this country where life is so pleasant". Indeed Ramadan, an outbreak of cholera and flooding delayed the diplomatic mission. Delacroix took advantage of this free time to explore this mysterious country and to try to understand its strange customs. He drank in Moroccan life, visited the bazaars and bought unknown articles, oriental slippers or caftans. Moreover, some of his finds are exhibited after his paintings in the Arab World Institute.

Thanks to the interpreter of the French consulate, Abraham Benichmol, who became his friend, many doors opened to him. He found his female models among his acquaintances. He was thus able to observe the nonchalant life of women, sheltered from indiscreet looks, and then paint their costumes made of silky cloth, their jewellery and



'Les Muletiers De Tetouan' by Eugène Delacroix

their flesh.

Precious notebooks, lead-pencil or pen sketches often touched up with watercolours, as well as a few fine canvases, put across his strange impressions. Nothing of this oriental magic escaped him, neither the plants with their vivid colours, nor the sun rising over the hills, nor the fantasia displays of horsemanship that he was fond of. It was, in fact, he who introduced the word into the French language.

Beauty ever present in the streets

Delacroix wandered about with his notebook in his hand. He was dazzled by what he saw, by the "beauty that was ever present in the streets." And, in a telegraphic style, he noted in the margins of his sketches: "The good-looking man with green sleeves, the mulatto slave who poured the tea in a yellow caftan and an Arab cloak tied at the back, the young bare-headed man, the almost negro with a pointed bonnet and a blue caftan". He would transcribe all these details in the eighty paintings on Moroccan subjects

that he was to do. In the evening, he would take up his precious notebook of sketches and it was then that he painted his Moroccan fantasia, Tetouan muletiers, Jewish bride, and Moroccans playing chess.

Yet he admitted that sometimes he was in despair. "All that I could do would be very little indeed compared with all that there is to do here. Sometimes, I am completely discouraged and I am sure that I am only bringing back a shadow."

He returned with seven travel notebooks of which, unfortunately only four still exist. They were extremely fragile and could only be handled with great caution. So they have been published in a facsimile version and it is the latter that could be seen in the display-cases of the Institute, as an introduction to the large paintings.

Enriched by his Moroccan experience, which transformed his way of painting, Eugène Delacroix received the revelation of colour and of a new light which fascinated him so much, that "precious and rare influence of the sun which gives everything a deeper life" — L'Actualité En France.

Recognising and assessing pain in children for more effective treatment

Pain in children, which had been underestimated or even ignored and under-treated by health professionals, benefits from a better approach in France today. Although the efficiency of evaluation grids of a child's suffering is now acknowledged, treatment based on powerful analgesics or morphine is still unjustly qualified as being dangerous.

By Virginie Jacobberger

PARIS — Pain mingled with fear, exaggerated anxiety and depression, and unspeakable suffering. The complexity of pain in children was, for a long time, ignored and underestimated. As certain doctors refused to take this phenomenon into consideration, this attitude was not recognised as being scientifically unfounded until the late 1980s. "For a long time, it was considered that the memorisation of pain did not exist in children, that its assessment was impossible as it was too subjective, that the use of the major analgesics was too dangerous and that the use of morphine would lead to undesirable effects, ones which would be incompatible with a paediatric prescription. For a dozen years now, we have been able to prove that these ideas are completely erroneous," notes Dr. Daniel Annequin who is in charge of the Paediatric Analgesia Unit, created a year ago, at the Armand Trousseau Hospital.

This unit, which is unique in France, is exclusively devoted to dealing with and preventing pain in children. It also offers training to medical staff and made it possible to implement new techniques for administering analgesics, particularly their being controlled by the children themselves. "There was a real problem of credibility of pain in children whereas we are quite capable of recognising it very precisely and measuring it with the help of evaluation grids established from various criteria such as the facial expression, sleep, crying, restlessness, etc., with the grids varying according to the age of the patient. Regular and rigorous observation of the child thus provides essential information. Scales of behaviour have to be used systematically when the child does not speak. From the age of five or six, the best assessment is the one that the child makes himself," Dr. Annequin explains.

Dr. Catherine Dolfus, who is in charge of the day hospital and works in the Paediatric Haematology Department at the Trousseau Hospital, comes up against the distress of young patients every day. She is far too aware of the unbearable pain of young children suffering from leukaemia or cancer and does not agree with some of her fellow doctors on the point of treating pain. "Unlike elsewhere, in the Haematology Department there has always been a real awareness of pain. Because of the seriousness of the diseases that we treat, we have always keenly felt the pain of the children. There are no more constraints when treating a child who has cancer than when treating an adult. The problem for a child is to be able to evaluate his pain and its intensity."

It is not easy for a child to express his pain and a young patient who suffers does not necessarily scream. Starting with the principle that importance should always be given to a child's moaning, Dr. Catherine Dolfus confirms the necessity of a self-evaluation of pain. "In our department, the nurses permanently have very practical tools which are easy to use to enable children to show the intensity of their pain, such as simple graduated rulers, or cubes for the youngest. For slightly older patients, we also use drawings. Some children represent their pain very precisely on drawn figures."

"This aid, when compared with a more general view of the disease, is often fundamental for the diagnosis. I will add that I am often struck by the precision of this self-diagnosis. Young patients always express themselves with a lot of rigour and accuracy." This method is accompanied by prolonged observation of the child.

It is essential to evaluate the pain as more than 50 per cent of children suffering from cancer have acute pain. Chemotherapy is one of the most effective treatments and can make the pain disappear in 24 hours, but it sometimes leads to serious side effects in young patients. Besides hair-loss, this often aggressive treatment can cause abdominal pain, risks of haemorrhage and considerable lesions in the mouth. At that stage, children have to be given other drugs than minor analgesics. Dr. Catherine Dolfus points out that "The use of powerful analgesics in children is relatively limited. For derivatives of codeine, there is no authorisation for putting them on the market in France for use by children under fifteen. For a long time, people were also terrified of using morphine whereas it has been proved that in the case of pain relief, there is no addiction."

Although morphine is a taboo subject and many health professionals are reticent to use it, it is, nevertheless, considered as the best treatment for unbearable inflammation in the mouth, for instance. The effectiveness of morphine means that it can be used for limited treatment, often lasting ten days or so. Using very low doses to begin with, morphine-related drugs can be administered to very young children so long as they are accompanied by strict respiratory supervision.

However, the use of such drugs cannot become commonplace as they can carry risks for the child owing to their high toxicity. "Certain combinations are dangerous during chemotherapy. This is the case with non-steroid anti-inflammatory drugs, which are responsible for kidney collapse, and certain analgesics," notes Dr. Pierre Dufour from the Onco-Haematology Department of the Hautepierre Hospital in Strasbourg. In haematology, it is out of the question to treat a child outside a therapeutic protocol which presents the best there is at the time of treatment and serves as a guide to the possible side-effects and manifestations of the pain. The treatment of the disease is always accompanied by a supporting treatment and it has been assessed that the cost of this extra treatment was two or three times higher than that of the chemotherapy. However, as a result, there has been a clear improvement in hospital conditions for young patients today — L'Actualite En France.



Pain in children has been ignored for a long time

Gulf War health damage remains mystery

By William MacLean
Reuter

KUWAIT — It is Kuwait, early 1991. Pillars of dense black smoke spew from oil fields torched by Iraqi troops in the dying days of the Gulf War.

Environmental researchers visiting a hospital ward for premature babies notice with alarm that air filters on incubators are clogged with tar from oil smoke.

"If the air was so dirty in one of the most sterile parts of a hospital, what were children on the street breathing?" Fatima Abdali, a scientist on that April 1991 visit, now wonders.

Five years on, no one seems to know the answer.

Scientists say the Gulf country could face a rise in oil-related cancers and respiratory diseases in the next decade because of the long-term effect of severely polluted air inhaled by residents in the nine months that the fires burned.

It may also face future pollution of the water table and continuing air contamination from the residue of millions of tonnes of oil spilled onto the desert floor during the fires.

But a climate of secrecy and the authorities' desire not to alarm the population have kept Kuwaitis in the dark about problems some of them may face in years to come from the consequences of Iraq's 1990-91 occupation, they add.

"There is a lot to be concerned about and a lot of research to be done, but it is very costly," said Jassem Al-Hassan, professor of biochemistry at Kuwait University.

"Authorities have not wanted to tell the people the extent of the damage... To me this is disastrous," said Yacoub Al-Sultan, assistant director general of the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research.

Kuwait has no record of so-called Gulf War syndrome, a mysterious combination of ailments reported by American and British veterans such as fatigue, flu and joint pains. Also, Kuwait has seen no rise in rates of cancer or of birth defects.

But since the war doctors say they have noticed an increased incidence of asthma, pneumonia, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and allergies. They say data on this has either not been collected or systematised, or is confidential.

The country's maternity hospital reports a 26 per cent increase in the national incidence of miscarriage between 1989 and 1993. It says that in the absence of research to pinpoint the cause, Gulf War pollution and stress cannot be ruled out.

Kuwait has conducted research into the health risks of the crisis. But the work has lacked focus, detail and coordination and suffered lukewarm official backing, scientists say.

Kuwait has one of the world's dustiest climates. Asthmatics worry that summer dust storms may whip up inhalable oilfire remnants from the desert that could worsen their condition.

The lacklustre effort has meant no one knows whether or not a health emergency lies in store for the tiny Gulf country.

"We are almost losing a golden chance to understand a sad phenomenon," said Ahmad Al-Shatti, an occupation health physician who headed a now-abandoned state research project.

"We wanted to draw lessons from what happened and help others be prepared in case such pollution happens elsewhere."

Dr. Shatti's project was intended to be a long-term study of the health of 2,000 families to probe possible links between health and environmental war damage such as the oilfires. It began in 1991 but petered out for lack of state support in 1994.

Dr. Shatti says moves are afoot to revive the study in some form, but some Kuwaiti officials and scientists remain bitter and perplexed that research has not had a higher priority.

Hundreds of tonnes of potentially carcinogenic chemical compounds known as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and metal particles were propelled into the atmosphere in oilfire smoke or onto the desert floor in spilled crude oil that formed lakes.

Despite a big clean-up, two million barrels or more of residue remains on the desert surface or sunk into the soil.

Government officials have repeatedly said that their post-war health research has been adequate and statements that will unnecessarily alarm the public should be avoided. They have said they will not hesitate to study any issue causing concern.

But Dr. Sultan says backing for research has been uneven. He says he suspects the policy is founded on a desire not to worry Kuwaitis or the expatriates who helped rebuild the country.

"We need precise research work," urges Maternity Hospital Director Saeed Othman. "It's a question mark. You need to identify the exact cause."

"You cannot simply ignore the problem. You need to have data," said Philip Salem, an adviser to the U.S. government on Gulf War syndrome.

Dr. Salem, on a visit to Kuwait last year, called for a revival of Kuwait's research into oilfire-related illness.

"There is a myth in the Arab World that research is a luxury, it is not something we need to do for ourselves, we can always import it from the West," he said. "I believe that this is wrong."

Expert: AIDS wanes in West, grows in Africa and Asia

By Sonali Verma
Reuter

NEW DELHI — The world is grappling with separate epidemics of the HIV virus with fresh cases no longer rising in Western nations but increasing rapidly in Africa and Asia, an AIDS expert said.

"We have two HIV epidemics in the world," Professor Max Essex of the Harvard AIDS Institute told a conference on infectious diseases in the Indian capital.

"We have the epidemic in the West, which has something of the order of two million people infected and is plateauing or decreasing."

"Conversely, if we look at the other epidemic, the epidemic of sub-Saharan Africa and Thailand, India... we see the number of people infected is of the order of 15-20 million and rising, increasing rapidly."

Prof. Essex said AIDS contracted in Western nations mainly through homosexual contact and intravenous drug use was spread by HIV-1-B, a strain of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

But AIDS in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa is caused by other varieties of the virus, HIV-1-A, C and E, which are contracted almost entirely by heterosexual contact, he said.

"Ninety to 95 per cent of the disease is not in heterosexuals in North America and Western Europe. Conversely, in virtually every other part of the world, 90 per cent of HIV cases are associated with heterosexual contact," he said.

He said sex education in developing countries was practically non-existent compared to AIDS awareness among youths in the West, a strong reason underlying unprotected sexual activity and the proliferation of HIV infection.

Prof. Essex cautioned researchers against complacency, saying most planned vaccines and therapy for AIDS were developed in the West and were consequently geared to dealing with HIV-1-B alone.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

BIG DEAL
By Penni Singleton

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- 10 Across the
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- 22 Small of mass
- 23 Giant
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Diagrams, 21x21

By Frances Burton

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SOLUTIONS OF LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE



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SOLUTIONS OF LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE

ACROSS

- 1 Across the
- 10 Across the
- 12 Small amount
- 13 Spanish name
- 21 Big city
- 22 Small of mass
- 23 Giant
- 24 Long time
- 25 Famed and
- 26 Dr. Doolittle
- 27 Shyly alone
- 30 Fortune teller
- 31 Before use
- 32 Sarcasm or Ruby
- 34 Little island
- 35 Flower arrangement
- 36 Down

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Diagrams, 21x21

By Frances Burton

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HISTORICAL MOSQUES OF INDIA

ACCORDING TO a survey of the "Rashtriya Sahara" an Urdu weekly, its editor, Dr. Aziz Buneey, claims that there are about 350,000 mosques in India. Most of these are remarkable in terms of architecture. But the Shahi Jama Masjid, built in the heart of Shahjahanabad, the walled city of Delhi, is the queen of all mosques in terms of both beauty and architecture. This mosque belongs to the Mughal era.

Equally graceful are several other mosques built before or after the Mughal mosques. Mandu's (Indore) Jama Masjid built in the 14th century by Hoshang Shah, Bhopal's Taj-ul-Masjid, Calcutta's Tipu Sultan Masjid, Delhi's Fatahpari Shahi masjid, Agra's Jama Masjid, are a few examples of heritage par excellence as far as mosques are concerned.

The source of Islamic architecture can be traced to 1200 A.D., a time when the Slave dynasty was at the helm. This continued till 1250 A.D. After that came the imperial rule of the Khilji dynasty (1296 A.D. to 1320 A.D.). Tughlaqs ruled in India from 1320 A.D. to 1413 A.D. The Sayyids and Lodis succeeded them. They held power from 1413 A.D. to 1526 A.D. The Mughals were the last Muslim rulers whose empire ended in 1857 A.D.

In the provinces of Punjab, Gujarat, Malwa, Bidar, Gulbarga, Jannpur, Bijapur, Golconda, Khandesh, Kashmir and Sasaram the rulers built some exquisite mosques. In terms of architecture, in no country was the movement of Islamisation more epoch-making than India.

The exact meaning of the word "masjid" is "the place of prostration before God." Derived originally from the somewhat humble dwelling of the founder of the creed at Medina in Arabia, traces of the shape of this domestic habitation are still to be detected in the developed mosque scheme, as it is basically an open courtyard surrounded by a pillared verandah, in a way an elaboration and enlargement of an Arab's house.

The original intention was not to provide any specific structure for devotional purposes, as prayer can be performed in the open air with nothing between the devotee and his God. But those concerned had not calculated on the natural craving of mankind for an enclosed building in which worship could be conducted in an appropriate environment, away from the distractions of daily life, and it was not long before a house of prayer came into being.

This began with a rectangular open space or "sahn", the four sides being enclosed by pillared cloisters or "Irwans", with a fountain or a tank in the centre for ablutions, a ceremony described as "the half of faith and the key of prayer." To meet the demands for some focal point in the scheme, the cloisters on the Mecca side (in India on the west) of the courtyard were expanded and elaborated into a pillared hall or sanctuary, with a wall at the back containing a recess or alcove called a "mehrab" indicating the "qibla" or direction for prayer.

On the right side of the

"mehrab" stands the "minbar", or the pulpit, while a portion of the sanctuary is screened off into a compartment for women. An elevated platform from which the "muezzin" summons the faithful to the prayer is also a necessity, and usually takes the form of a high tower or a "minaret."

In every large town there is a pivotal mosque known as the "Jumma Masjid" (the collecting mosque) or as Arabs call it,

earliest event took place in the 8th century when much of the lower Indus came within the influence of the Caliphs of Baghdad.

The second and a much later event occurred when, in the first half of the 12th century, the Ghaznavids from Afghanistan administered their possessions in the Punjab from Lahore, where a viceroy occupied an important group of palaces and government build-

ings for this purpose. These were almost destroyed by the invaders of Ghor in the same century. But the real impact was made in the 13th century only with the Slave dynasty ruler Qutub-ud-Din Aibak occupied the throne in Delhi.

the pattern of Akbar's mosque at Fatehpur Sikri, though the interior is closer to the Jama Masjid of Agra. Shahjahan was prompted to build this mosque when Jahangir showed him the Fatehpur Sikri mosque that truly depicted the grace of the Mughal heritage.

This mosque was the largest in the world at the time of its construction. Huge mosques have been built since then in Iraq, Indonesia, Dubai etc. The

had black-coloured half domes, whereas the domes of the Mughal mosques, in comparison, are nicer to look at and craftily built. Moghals mostly used marble for their domes with stripes of black. Even the Shahi Masjid of Lahore built by Aurangzeb, is a replica of the Jama Masjid.

Katra Masjid

One of the most beautiful mosques of the eastern region of India is in West Bengal's Murshidabad district. Known as the Katra Masjid, it was built by Murshid Quli Khan, the diwan and subsequently the subedar of Bengal during 1700-27, under the emperors of Aurangzeb. Murshid Quli Khan shifted his capital from Dhaka (now in Bangladesh) to Maqsoodabad in 1705 and named it after himself. He built many other edifices also, but only to be demolished by the later rulers. The Katra Masjid alone remained intact.

Bhopal Mosque

Taj-ul-Masjid at Bhopal, built by Aurangzeb's daughter, is considered to be the most beautiful one by the Mughals. To some people, it is more elegant than even the Jama Masjid of Delhi. But the same can be said about the Mecca Masjid of Hyderabad built by Qutub Quli Shah, the Bahmani ruler. Then the two Jama Masjids of Bengal too are of historical as well as architectural importance.

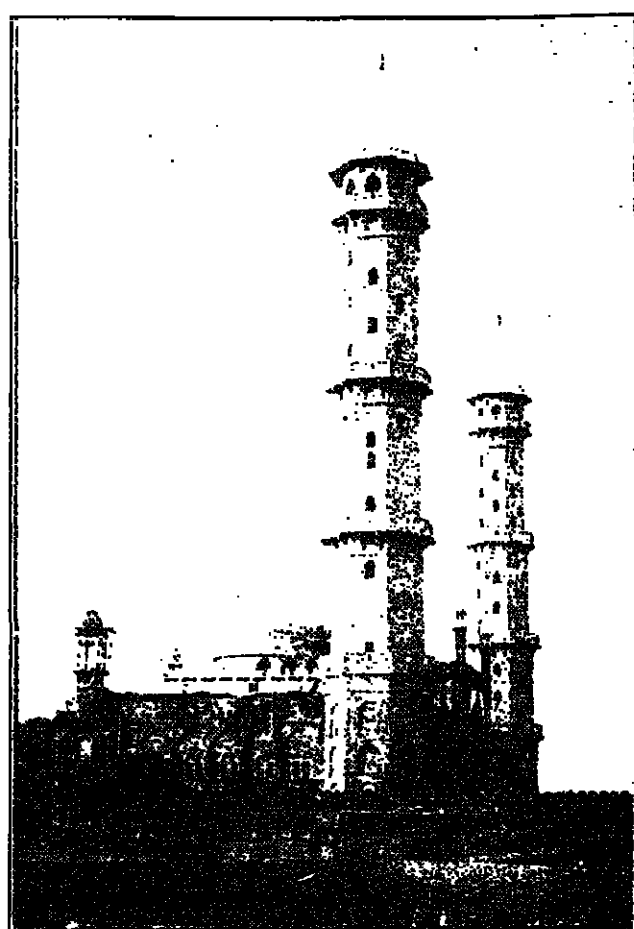
Kashmir Mosques

The mosques of Kashmir are

conspicuous by their inimitable style of architecture for most of them are built of wood. But one such mosque, Charar-e-Sharif, was burnt last year by some mercenary militants. The technique of building wooden structures in Kashmir is historical and has certain local and environmental reasons. A variety of cedar tree "deodar" (Cedrus Deodara) is the wood mainly used. It is floated down the rivers to its destination in the form of huge balks.

The Jami Masjid of Srinagar was built exactly in 1400 A.D. by Sikandar Butshikan and enlarged by his son and successor Zain-ul-Abidin. Although a considerable portion of this immense congregational mosque from an early date may have been composed of brick masonry, its interior has expensive timber work, and consequently, on three occasions, been damaged by fire. It has a courtyard of about 240 feet in diameter surrounded on all sides by colonnades, the entire area being contained within a lofty exterior wall making a rectangle of 285 feet each side.

Around the courtyard, a continuous arched arcade with a clerestory is carried, but in the centre of each side the sequence of arches is interrupted by the imposition of a large structure of almost independent appearance, having a square frontage containing an archway, while above rises a pyramidal roof and steeple. The lofty colonnades extend around the entire building, four isles deep on three sides and three isles deep on the fourth side. They are composed of rows of pillars each made out of a single "deodar" trunk, varying from 25 feet to 50 feet in



Taj-ul-Masjid, Bhopal

height, and as they amount to as many as 378 in number, some idea of the slender verticality and elongated effect of the interior perspective may be gained. Kashmir's other famous mosque is the "Panhar Masjid" (stone mosque), which is built with stone as well as timber.

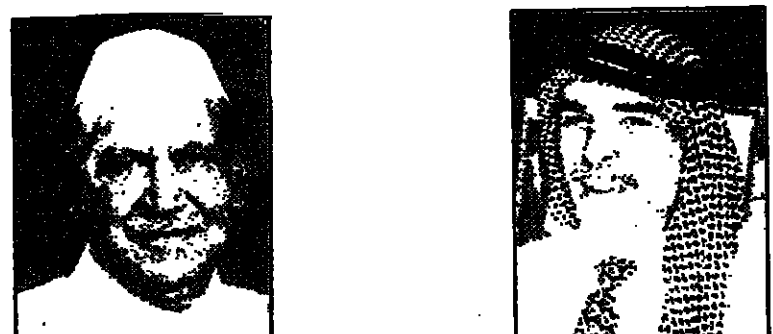
What is most commendable about Indian mosques is that they are all full of grace and only a few are in a dilapidated state. The community people take care that their area's mosque is well looked after. They contribute money etc to maintain them. The mosque of Nawab Qasim in Qasimjan Street of the walled city of Delhi was rebuilt in this manner.

The total cost came to about one crore rupees, but the people of the nearby locality of Ahata Kaley Sahab managed to collect the amount. This mosque is an architectural blend of the Turkish, Arab and Indian styles. Similarly, a mosque in Bombay's Juhu area in the vicinity of the airport has been built at a cost of three crore rupees, all in pure white marble.

Though it is the Waqf Board in India that looks after the mosques, but the real help comes through the namazis and the community people. Incidentally, the Indian government has recently increased the salaries of the masjid staff almost three-fold.

PAK VAN SERVICES

Congratulates India and its people on the occasion of
"The Republic Day of India"
and extends its wishes for a healthy & prosperous future



ON THE OCCASION OF THE
REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA



Indo-Jordan Chemicals Company Ltd.
(A Joint Venture of SPIC-India & JPMC-Jordan)
CONVEYS ITS FELICITATIONS AND CORDIAL
WISHES TO THE PEOPLE OF INDIA



MODERN VEHICLE TRADING CO.

Agents of TATA in Jordan
and

ELBA HOUSE CO. LTD

Manufacturers of TATA Buses in Jordan

Congratulate the president
and the people of India
on the occasion of the
REPUBLIC DAY

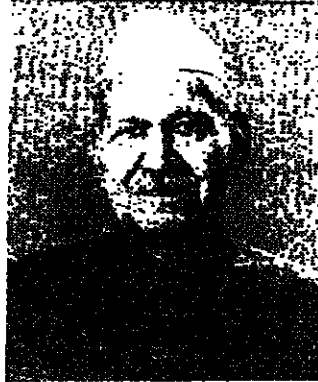


On the occasion of the
Republic Day of India
Indo-Jordan Scholars Club
conveys its hearty greeting to the
government and Indian people

On the occasion of the
Republic Day of India
Kawar Drug Store
conveys its hearty greeting to the
government and the Indian people

Felicitations and Best Wishes to
India and her people on its
REPUBLIC DAY
With best compliments from
**Moh'd S. Al karesh and
Kareem E. Zaghloul**

On the occasion of the
Republic Day of India
Dr. Naser Al Maaitah
director of Zarqa University Services Est.
conveys his hearty greeting to the govern-
ment and Indian people.



**JORDAN FERTILIZER INDUSTRY
COORDINATION COMMITTEE**

**Jordan Phosphate
Mines Company**



**Arab Potash
Company**

WISH

THE PEOPLE OF INDIA

A HAPPY REPUBLIC DAY

AFFIRMING JORDANIAN FRIENDSHIP

AND HOPES OF CONTINUED

PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY

Arab banks under fire for failing to merge

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A senior Arab banker Wednesday criticised regional banks for failing to merge to face world competition and urged local authorities to take measures to spur such a process.

Mahmoud Abdul Aziz, chairman of the Beirut-based Union of Arab Banks (UAB), said mergers had become necessary to face giant banking units emerging in Europe and other countries integrating their economies.

"I have to concede that there is a stronger resistance to mergers and changes in the Arab World than in Europe, America or other areas," Mr. Abdul Aziz told the United Arab Emirates (UAE) daily Al Itihad.

"We here still have the characteristic of thinking only of our personal interests and that creates a resistance to merger although it has become the language of world banks and the trend gained pace in 1995," he said.

More than 300 commercial banks operate in the 22-member Arab League, with assets of over \$500 billion.

Arab officials have repeatedly called for mergers to strengthen the financial position of national banks and expand their operations.

The calls gained momentum after the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) classified Arab states, except Saudi Arabia, as high risk countries in lending activities on the grounds their banks fall short of capital adequacy levels.

"We hope the Arab central banks will use their powers to convince bank owners and shareholders of the importance of mergers," Mr. Abdul Aziz said.

Mr. Abdul Aziz, an Egyptian, also criticised the BIS Basic committee for its classification of Arab countries, saying most banks in the region have met its requirements for adequacy, the ratio between shareholders' equity and assets.

Basle, which comprises the central banks in leading industrial countries, has set the minimum adequacy level of eight per cent for banks worldwide to ensure such units have enough funds to deal with financial crises.

"Arab banks have met the Basic adequacy requirement," Mr. Abdul Aziz said. "Unfortunately the Basic decisions were taken in a period which followed a psychological crisis of international banks. I think such a classification is wrong and has no basis because it assumed all Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, are located in a high-risk region."

Asian tigers urged to give more for less developed neighbours

MANILA (AFP) — Asian Development Bank President Mitsuo Sato has called on Asia's tiger economies to give more to a fast-shrinking fund to alleviate poverty in the region's poorest countries amid reluctance from Western donors.

Mr. Sato said U.S. and European donors are to meet next month in Bonn, Germany along with Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan to discuss replenishing the Asian Development Fund, which is expected to run dry after this year.

He said the discussions would take place "in less than ideal conditions" because "the overall trend is clearly towards a shrinking of the total volume of concessional resources for development assistance."

The development fund, which is replenished every five years, is sourced from the budget of industrialised donors and is loaned without interest exclusively to Asia's poorest countries on repayment terms of up to 40 years.

The fund's current five-year programme, worth \$4.2 billion, runs out at the end of 1996 and Mr. Sato said he was seeking about \$5 billion for the next programme.

It loans money for projects in health and sanitation, education and the environment, which other private institutions and the capital markets are reluctant to finance because of low investment returns.

"Funds will be available in 1996, but the question is next year," Mr. Sato said in a news briefing at the bank's Manila headquarters. "We'll be running out of money."

Asian Development Fund lending last year increased 24 per cent to \$1.455 billion, the bank said.

Mr. Sato said that although Asia continued to lead the world in terms of economic growth, the region was still home to majority of the planet's poorest people, particularly in South Asia and Indochina.

He said that while infrastructure projects were crucial to Asia's fast-developing economies, funds were needed for socially relevant programmes to make the growth equitable.

Mr. Sato declined to say exactly how much money was needed to replenish the Asian Development Fund, saying the precise amount would be discussed in Bonn and succeeding meetings.

He invoked "Asian solidarity" in urging the region's wealthy nations to do more to help their less developed neighbours as the United States and traditional donors from Europe hedged on donations due to budgetary problems.

Washington still has to pay about \$347 million in arrears to the current Asian Development Fund programme, and other donors have taken this as a signal to hold their contributions as well.

U.S. officials have complained in the past that Asia's economic dragons — those that have achieved the wealth of the industrialised countries — were not giving money in proportion to their economic status.

"We're easy targets to get cut. It's very easy to cut the bilateral (when a donor country has budgetary problems)," said Asian Development Bank chief information officer Maurice Bauche.

Mr. Sato said the participation of the Asian tiger economies was critical to the Bonn discussions.

But he added that Washington's commitment was crucial to the survival of the Asian Development Fund. The United States and Japan are the biggest contributors to the fund.

Mr. Bauche said some of the Asian tigers, which were former recipients of the bank's soft loans, would be attending the donors' meeting for the first time.

Mr. Sato assured Western donors that Asia was not "wasting" resources and cited the region's "excellent" economic performance in seeking more funds.

Oman targets higher trade surplus in 1996-2000 plan

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Gulf state of Oman expects its trade surplus to surge by nearly 15 per cent in its 1996-2000 development plan due to an increase in crude production and non-oil exports.

Figures released by the ministry of development showed total exports were projected to jump in 13.38 billion Omani riyals (\$34.78 billion) during the fifth plan from around 10.52 billion riyals (\$27.35 billion) during the fourth development plan.

Imports were also forecast to surge to 10.06 billion riyals (\$26.15 billion) from 7.63 billion riyals (\$19.83 billion) due to an expected economic upturn and multi-billion-dollar projects within reforms.

This will boost the projected surplus in the trade balance to around \$8.6 billion in the fifth plan from \$7.5 billion in the fourth plan.

Oman approved its fifth development plan last week with a lower projected spending of 10.09 billion riyals (\$26.23 billion) compared with nearly 10.8 billion riyals (\$28 billion).

Reduced expenditure, part of overall economic reforms, slashed the estimated budget deficit to around \$1.39 billion from \$5.82 billion. Officials said the shortfall would likely disappear at the end of that plan.

Government spending remains the main factor in economic activity in Oman and the spending cut is expected to be cushioned by a projected increase of 87 per cent in public and private investment to around \$18.9 billion.

Nearly 53 per cent of the investment would be pumped into the energy sector, mostly in a multi-billion-dollar gas liquefaction project that will produce around six million tonnes of LNG by 2000.

While the project is set to sharply boost Oman's income, it will hurt the balance of payments in the short run, according to official figures.

Interest on loans to the project will combine with those to finance reforms and a forecast 1.7 per cent growth in foreign labour to widen the gap in the balance of payments.

Governor says confidence in Bahrain remains strong

MANAMA (R) — Confidence in Bahrain's financial market, largest in the Gulf, is strong among banks and other financial institutions despite anti-government unrest, central bank governor Abdullah Saif said Wednesday.

"Bahrain's market enjoys full confidence at all levels," the head of the Bahrain Monetary Agency (BMA) told Reuters.

"Financial institutions in Bahrain posted good results in 1995 and a number of them will reveal their figures in the coming days which will prove that their results, services and operations were good despite all circumstances they faced," he said.

Protests by Shi'ite Muslim opponents of the Bahraini government broke out in December 1994 in support of demands for the release of political prisoners and the restoration of a parliament dissolved 20 years ago.

The unrest died down in April after the death of at least 13 civilians and three policemen in violent clashes. It resumed this month but at a lower scale.

A Bahrain-based senior banker, commenting on the riots, said "anything in any country which disturbs the natural confidence of the (financial) institutions is unhelpful."

Bahrain is the Gulf's major financial centre with around 100 banks including 47 offshore banking units whose assets climbed to \$67 billion at the end of September 1995 from \$65 billion a year earlier.

A new Russian bank, Rossiyskiy Kredit Bank, opened a representative office in Bahrain last year and Mr. Saif said the BMA was studying requests of international banks to open offices on the island. He gave no details.

The central bank governor, said Bahrain's market, which provides various financial services to Arab Gulf states, would remain a major financial centre in the region despite pressures from new international and regional markets.

"I think Bahrain's market has made positive steps and placed itself in international markets and the expertise which the financial services in the Gulf cannot ignore," Mr. Saif said.

"The development in managing institutions and providing various services and banking instruments to investors and clients will help keep institutions developed and successful," he added.

At least three Bahrain-based banks reported higher net profit in 1995 including Investcorp Bank which posted record profit of 70.3 million.

Al Ahli Commercial Bank made a record \$14 million net profit in 1995 and Bahrain Middle East Bank reported a 97 per cent increase in net profit to \$5.6 million.

"I think there is competition not only regionally but also internationally. Any institution which is able to overcome these challenges will succeed," Mr. Saif said.

"The banking service is dynamic. There are always challenges but you have to qualify yourself... thank God, our institutions have the expertise to face the challenges," he added.

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Harriet Arnold and Mike Anglin
Remember, invest wisely

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

EXIOD
NEARY
CUSILE
STESUL

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: WITH AND (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: CHESS DIZZY CLERGY BANTER
Answer: Making cakes for the bake sale left her like this — STIR CRAZY

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen
GLASBERGEN

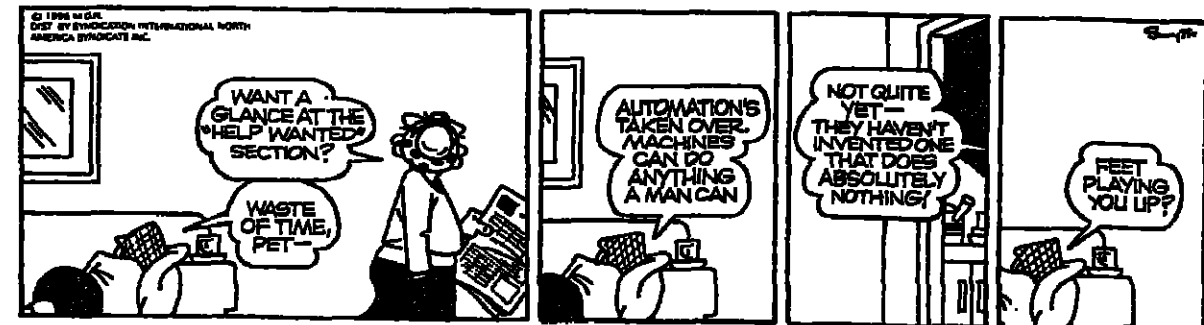
Click

"Computer tennis is better exercise because there's less stress on your knees and elbows."

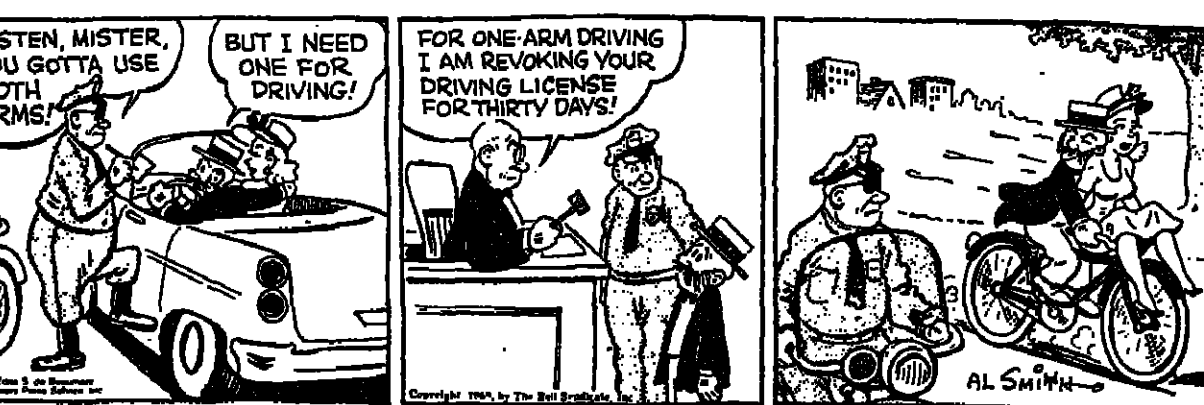
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 1996

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Study into an accepted system which can assist you in the improvement of your business matters.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Listen carefully to the views of partners even though you are quite sure of your own, and be more cooperative to get good results.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a good day to get started on some venture which can be worked on far into the future. You will have greater success.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Plan to get into amusements today which will please you for some time to come, and contact companions to accompany you.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Be more cooperative with those who dwell with you, and don't be so concerned with your own personal wishes.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Go after the data you need which can help you to be more successful in the future. Make a fine impression on bigwigs.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Financial affairs should be first on the agenda this morning, so work consistently at this time and become more successful.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You are dynamic today and have fine ideas for gaining your personal aims, so go after them in a positive manner.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Sit in the quiet of your study and analyze how far you have traveled towards your goals and the distance still to be covered.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get into that plan with a good friend which can last for some time to come today, and both can benefit greatly.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Early handle outside affairs and keep at them until you gain fine benefits you desire. Arrive on time for appointments.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Plan to handle activities which are different from the norm, but which will last quite far into the future.

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 1996

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Be sure you know what you want to accomplish this morning, and then make your plans to gain aims wisely.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Get in the outside world early today and get much completed for which you have little time during work days.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Hit on the interesting philosophy of life on which to best operate later today, and then see a bigwig who can help you.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Handle duties wisely this morning, and then you can keep any promises you have made later this evening.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Be a partner and complete that contract this morning, work on details later today. Outside situation should be studied.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Anything which needs your attention can be handled early today, and then you can plan the future wisely with your partners.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This morning should be spent at fun of sports, and later today you can get duties handled well. Avoid heavy expenditure of money.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Try to understand any problems which kin have, and cheer them up; help them to solve problems wisely.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is a good morning to run errands and make visits which are important. Enjoy family at home and feel content.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Be modern in handling monetary affairs this morning, and later today study into periodicals which give good suggestions.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Plan how best to gain personal wishes this morning, and then do the tasks required for such purpose.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Now you understand what should be completed today and tonight in order to gain your fondest wishes. Then get in touch with friends.

Birthstone of January: Garnet-Rose Quartz

THE Daily Crossword by Roger Jurgovan

ACROSS

1 Moved smoothly
5 Shanx
9 Styx flows through it
14 Cipher
15 Alto
16 Reduce in intensity
17 Hurry-up letters
18 Mobile giantess?
20 Restored building, briefly
22 Follows deuce
23 Field shelter
24 Miami maiden?
27 WWII battle site
28 Discriminative one
33 Reclined
35 Muslim holy book
39 Bistro patron
40 Vicinity
42 Expert
44 Thought
45 Tabulations
46 Basic character
49 Mischievous child

DOWN

1 Neckwear
2 Worthless one
3 Pocatello party giver?
4 Exit
5 WWII gp.
6 Mediterranean island
7 Frighten
8 Bath wear

9 Inferior actor
10 Blind as —
11 Stun
12 English school
13 Mailed
19 Certain votes
21 Cheat
25 Condemn
26 Guided
29 Forum dozen
30 Gary grandmothers?
31 Appear
32 Corner
33 Tar
34 Solo
36 Sheep
37 Blvd
38 After deductions
41 Lawyer, abbr.
43 Space gp.
46 Part of a min.
48 Fellows
51 Alone
53 Revolve
55 U.S. junst
56 Egg-shaped

57 — gin fizz
58 Children in
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Fokker wins breathing space to reorganise

AMSTERDAM (R) — Dutch planemaker Fokker N.V. Tuesday won court protection from creditors at its three aircraft building units, winning vital time to reorganise and seek potential partners.

The future of the 76-year-old company had been in doubt since Monday, when its major shareholder, Germany's Daimler-Benz A.G., said it would no longer provide financial support.

"Tonight we have asked for, and received, protection from creditors," Chairman Ben van Schaik told a news conference at Fokker's Amsterdam headquarters.

The month-long protection order effectively gives Fokker breathing space to look

for potential partners for the aircraft assembly lines in Amsterdam, which turn out some 40 dozen regional jets a year.

"In the coming four weeks we will try to finish work in progress. We will take all measures to keep as much of the company operating as possible," Mr. Van Schaik said.

During the four-week "cooling-off" period, Fokker said creditors would not be able to seize goods from aircraft plants on which they have a claim.

Effectively splitting the old company in half, Fokker said that a group of its other smaller businesses, including aircraft services, military and space equipment operations, would not come under court

protection.

These units — Elmo (an independent unit producing advanced electronic units and electrical systems), aircraft services, special products and the company's 50 per cent stake in Fokker Space — employ around 3,000 workers in the Netherlands, a little under half of the company's 7,900-strong workforce.

Both the Dutch cabinet and Fokker's board met separately in crisis session earlier Tuesday in a bid to thrash out a plan to salvage businesses threatened with closure.

After reporting a record first-half net loss of 651 million guilders (\$394 million) last autumn, Fokker has been kept alive through Daimler's financial guarantees.

Sager Insurance to offer shares for public subscription next month

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Sager Insurance Company, the first insurance firm to invite public subscription from among five newly registered firms, will place 1,500,000 shares with a face value of JD 1 each in early February, a company official said Wednesday.

The founders of the company have already raised 25 per cent of the JD 3 million capital, with underwriters making up another 25 per cent to raise the paid-up capital to be paid up in two years after registration.

The company was registered in January, three months after the Ministry of Industry and Trade opened registration of new insurance companies in line with new regulations adopted in 1994 that lifted a ban on new insurance companies.

The ban was adopted in the early 80s after the government felt that there were enough insurance firms in the country to meet the demand and was lifted after intense lobbying by new operators who wanted to enter the market.

Six new companies have already been registered — the Arab Insurers with a capital of JD 2 million, the Arab German Insurance Company (JD 5 million), the Jordan Islamic Insurance Company (JD 2 million), the Jordan International Insurance Company (JD 2 million), the Amman Insurance Company (JD 2 million) and the Sager Insurance Company (JD 3 million).

The insurance market in Jordan is looking forward to a boom in business amid expectations of intense economic activity in the wake of the breakthroughs in the Middle

East peace process.

By law, all consignments coming into and leaving the country should be insured by local insurance company. This provision protects the interest of local firms against international competition.

There are many importers who acquire additional insurance from international firms to satisfy the requirements of exporters.

Local insurance operators say that there is an increasing trend on the part of foreign exporters to accept insurance offered by Jordanian companies in view of the strength that some of them have acquired in recent years.

The founders of Sager Insurance include Ali Farid Saad, Yahya Zahran, Ahmad Al-Jarrah, Ziad Al-Majali, Nayef Tarawneh, Michael Sayegh, Mohammad Barakat and Mohammad Haitham Nabulsi.

DAILY BUSINESS YEAR

A review of news from the Arabic press

Number of lawsuits on returned cheques surge to 7,498 in 1995

★ ★ COURT RECORDS show that lawsuits stemming from returned cheques were on the rise consistently since 1991, but a sharp increase was witnessed last year. The number of lawsuits in 1995 totalled 7,498, compared to 5,959 in 1994. In 1991, the number of such lawsuits was 2,552. The number rose to 2,660 and 3,821 lawsuits in 1992 and 1993. According to a Central Bank memorandum sent to all licensed banks on Jan. 11, 1996, the number of returned cheques during December 1995 was 40,487 for a total value of JD 36.35 million, compared to 34,452 returned cheques for a value of JD 32.56 million during November 1995. Within Amman alone the number of returned cheques last month was 34,330 for a total value of JD 31.93 million while in November 1995 the number was 29,233 returned cheques carrying JD 28.29 million in value, the memorandum said (Al-Dustour).

Refrigerated transport sector suffers JD 10 million loss

★ ★ JORDAN'S REFRIGERATED transport sector was estimated to have incurred JD 10 million of loss in 1995 and more than JD 30 million over the past five years. The estimates were given by Abdul Rahim Al-Jammal, general manager of the Refrigerated Trucks Services Company in the north, who hoped that the Jordanian-Israeli transport agreement would provide more opportunities for transport to compensate for the losses of previous year. There are between 800 and 1,200 Jordanian refrigerated trucks in operation (Al-Dustour).

Public shareholding companies employ 44,562 workers

★ ★ STATISTICS PUBLISHED in the tenth directory of the Amman Financial Market show that a total of 44,562 workers were employed by 148 public shareholding companies at the end of 1994. The number represents one per cent of the population of the Kingdom. The companies employed 2,876 non-Jordanians, 78 per cent of whom were working for the Arab Bank Ltd. due to its large overseas network. Jordan Phosphate Mines Company ranked first, as it employed 5,516 workers followed by the Arab Bank Ltd with 4,404 staff. The Jordan Petroleum Refinery was third with a workforce of about 4,000 (Al-Aswat).

Housing department carried out 82 projects costing JD 175m since 1965

★ ★ THE HOUSING and Urban Development Department implemented 82 projects since it was set up in 1965 until 1992. The projects comprised 15,500 housing units, for a total cost of JD 175 million, and covered 1.5 million square metres of build-up area. The department's "investment programme" which was started last year includes establishing 21 new housing projects at a total cost of JD 36 million. The programme calls for readying 11,271 plots of land at Al-Talibeh, Ein Al-Basha and Abu Nsir in Amman Governorate as well as Salt City. The department launched housing projects costing JD 600,000 at Karak last week. The project, known as Al-Marj Housing, involves readying 206 plots of land that will be organised on a total area of 126 dunums (Al-Dustour + Al-Rai).

Losses from occupational accidents estimated at JD 14.6 million

★ ★ A SENIOR official at the Ministry of Labour estimated total material losses resulting from occupational injuries in 1995 at JD 14.6 million. He said that as a result of 3,492 inspection visits to check on safety measures at various factories and workshops, the ministry issued 1,253 warnings and 872 violation notices and closed 27 establishments (Al-Rai).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
HOUSING BANK CENTER, AMMAN - SEMESTER I				
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 24/01/1996				
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CHANGING PRICE
BANKS SECTOR				
JORDANIAN BANK	2000	7200	3.600	3.600
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	500	1320	2.640	2.640
THE HOUSING BANK	950	4212	4.750	4.750
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	3450	3623	1.050	1.050
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	2198	6058	3.700	3.670
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	1000	3520	3.520	3.520
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	17550	14918	1.850	1.850
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	800	1091	1.360	1.350
BANKS SECTOR	28468	44272	INDEX NUMBER: 185.73	CHANGE: -0.06%
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR				
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	16623	28014	1.710	1.680
JORDAN RIVER WATER	200	480	2.400	2.300
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	90	498	5.540	5.560
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	3300	8460	2.550	2.550
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	2660	4318	1.630	1.620
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	1000	980	1.000	980
MACHINERY EQUIP. RENTING & MAINTENANCE	600	748	1.240	1.10
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODITIES HOTELS	1750	3745	2.150	2.140
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	1825	6281	3.420	3.480
ARAB PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	100	120	1.200	1.200
UNITED CO. FOR ORGANIZING LAND TRANS.	800	1760	2.220	2.200
UNION LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.	400	380	950	950
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	29338	55441	INDEX NUMBER: 125.91	CHANGE: -0.69%
SERVICES SECTOR				
ATKINSON COMPANY INDUSTRIAL MANUFACTURING	1000	1200	1.200	1.200
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	10048	36087	3.610	3.600
THE ARAB POTASH	540	2924	5.400	5.420
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	1580	16467	9.880	9.750
JORDAN TANNING	4100	955	7.100	7.100
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	1558	9531	6.100	6.100
THE JORDAN WOODSTOCK MILLS	350	2643	7.590	7.550
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	10250	10257	4.680	4.550
THE JORDAN TILES MANUFACTURING	750	1688	2.250	2.250
ARAB CHEMICALS INDUSTRIES	100	1160	12.000	11.600
ARAB INDUSTRIES	2450	5194	2.150	2.120
DAR AL DANA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	2380	16781	7.100	7.050
LITTON & POLYMER	4100	2296	1.400	1.400
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	400	556	1.400	1.390
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRIES	3562	5912	1.680	1.660
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	4500	4410	980	980
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1280	3448	1.860	1.860
JORDAN ROCKWELL INDUSTRIES	1350	1337	1.000	990
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	300	1083	3.610	3.600
ARAB CENTER FOR FURN. & CHEMICALS	700	1186	1.690	1.670
UNIVERSAL WOODEN INDUSTRIES	800	1571	1.960	1.950
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL REFRIGERATORS CO.	6850	12781	1.880	1.850
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	2100	2856	1.370	1.360
AL-BAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	6350	5271	2.250	2.220
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	4782	6503	1.350	1.360
UNION CHEMICAL & FERTILIZER OIL INDUSTRIES	100	152	1.560	1.520
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	57154	149327	INDEX NUMBER: 125.20	CHANGE: -0.80%
GRAND TOTAL	114940	249240	INDEX NUMBER: 153.47	CHANGE: -0.41%
NO. OF TRADING SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET : 139296				
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET : 67922				

Granada wins control of Forte after bitter battle

LONDON (R) — Leisure and media company Granada Tuesday won control of hotel and catering group Forte after a bitter £3.9 billion (\$5.9 billion) takeover battle.

Granada said in a statement that it had received acceptances from shareholders with 60.89 per cent of Forte, with the total still to be counted, and so emerged victorious from one of the biggest and most dramatic

takeover struggles Britain has witnessed in recent years.

"We are naturally delighted with the outcome. Sir Rocco (Forte) and his colleagues put a powerful and spirited defence," an elated Granada chief executive Gerry Robinson said in a statement.

"We said from the outset that we regarded this as a significant opportunity for Granada and that we could

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Wednesday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3676/86	Canadian dollar	1.4808/18
	1.4808/18	Deutsche marks	1.6586/96
	1.6586/96	Dutch guilders	1.1906/16
	1.1906/16	Swiss francs	30.44/48
	30.44/48	Belgian francs	5.0692/42
	5.0692/42	French francs	1993.5/5.0
	1993.5/5.0	Italian lire	106.71/81
	106.71/81	Japanese yen	6.8450/50
	6.8450/50	Swedish crowns	6.4840/90
	6.4840/90	Norwegian crowns	5.7247/47
	5.7247/47	Danish crowns	1.4203/13
	1.4203/13	Singapore dollars	0.7358/63
	0.7358/63	Australian dollars	7.7325/35
	7.7325/35	Hong Kong dollars	
One sterling	\$1.5100/10		
Gold (ounce)	\$402.10/402.60		

The writing was on the wall for Forte from early Tuesday when a key shareholder came out in support of Granada.

Fund manager Mercury Asset Management, which holds more than 14 per cent of Forte shares and has a similar stake in Granada, announced its backing for Granada a few hours ahead of the 1300 GMT final deadline for the offer.

Mercury gave no reasons for its decision but is known to be an admirer of Granada's management and Mr. Robinson in particular.

Granada launched an initial £3.4 billion (\$5.1 billion) bid for Forte on Nov. 22 and sweetened it with a special dividend and increased cash alternative two weeks ago.

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Financial Markets in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

Eurocurrency Interest Rates				
Date: 24/1/1996				
Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.31	5.25	5.12	4.93
Sterling Pound	6.06	6.00	5.95	5.93
Deutsche Mark	3.31	3.25	3.12	3.12
Swiss Franc	1.56	1.56	1.44	1.44
French Franc	6.00	6.12	3.12	4.12
Japanese Yen	0.25	0.51	0.37	0.43
European Currency Unit	5.75	4.68	3.62	4.56

Precious Metals				
Date: 24/1/1996				
Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz
Gold	401.90	7.80	Silver	5.51

* 21 Karat
Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 24/1/1996

Currency		
	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7060	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.0704	1.0758
Deutsche Mark	0.4775	0.4799
Swiss Franc	0.5944	0.4799
French Franc	0.5944	0.5974
Japanese Yen	0.1397	0.1404
Dutch Guilder	0.6644	0.6677
Swedish Krona	0.0000	0.0000
Italian Lira	0.0444	0.0446
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000

Other Currencies		
Date: 24/1/1996		
Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8620	1.8780
Lebanese Lira	0.04425	0.04465
Saudi Riyal	0.1870	0.1892
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3070	2.3670
Omani Riyal	0.1952	0.1945

Agassi shuts down Courier to reclaim No.1 spot

Huber knocks out Martinez to reach Australian Open semifinal

MELBOURNE (Agencies) — Boris Becker has sounded an ominous warning to his rivals at the Australian Tennis Open after derailed confident young Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov in their quarter-final here on Wednesday.

Becker, who revived his ailing form last year appearing in the Wimbledon final and winning the Grand Slam Cup last year, destroyed sixth seeded Kafelnikov, 6-4, 7-6 (11/9), 6-1 in one hour 52 minutes.

It will be a battle of the red heads with Becker facing unseeded Australian Mark Woodforde in Friday's semi-

final. Woodforde, ranked 67th in the world, upset seventh seeded Swede Thomas Enqvist, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 in two hours five minutes in the night's final match to reach his first Grand Slam semi-final.

Thirty year old Woodforde, playing in his 38th Slam, is Australia's first Grand Slam semi-finalist since Pat Cash here in 1988.

Earlier, Andre Agassi triumphed in a battle of wills to blunt pugnacious Jim Courier in five sets and reclaim the world No. 1 tennis ranking.

Only Michael Chang stands between Agassi and

another finals' appearance as his title defence stepped up a few notches in a rousing, 6-7 (7/9), 2-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 victory in a match carried over from Tuesday because of rain.

"The dynamics of our match-up is real clear," Agassi said of his 12th meeting with Courier. "One of us is always trying to impose the will on the other, to dictate play, and when one person is dictating play they look like ten times the player than the other guy."

"So when he has raised the intensity and I don't answer he can beat me and look like the much better player, and likewise if I can turn it around and play aggressive and control the points all of a sudden he looks like a completely different player."

"Really it's a battle for the whole match and who's going to control the tempo, the pace, the rallies and the points, and when he raised his level it left me with little choice."

"When you are two sets down to a player like Jim you're not thinking about anything except not being embarrassed really... you're getting pummelled and you're trying everything to put up some resistance."

"It's easy to feel like a hero coming from two sets to love down, but the reality of it is you don't have a choice but to go for everything inside of you and hope that it's there."

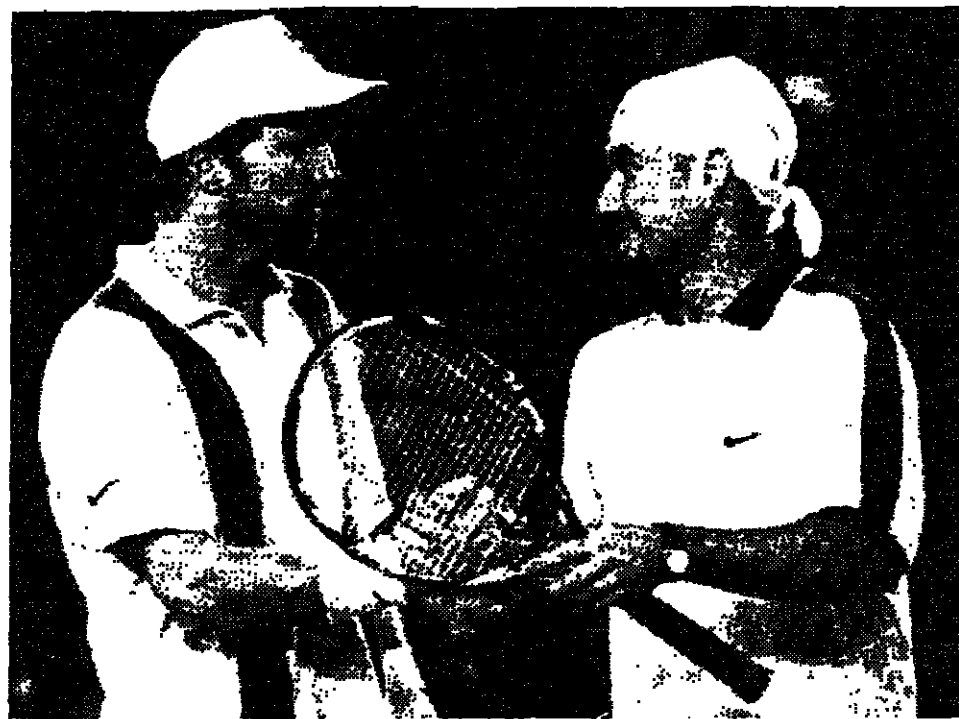
Courier, a two-time winner here in 1992-93 and looking tremendous in the second set and part of the third, paid tribute to Agassi for digging himself out of the hole, to win.

"My hat's off to him... he came up with the shots when he needed them."

It was Agassi's third five-set battle at this year's Open, but Wednesday's win was significant — Agassi snapped a six-match losing sequence against his long-time rival Courier and denied Austrian Thomas Muster the chance of leapfrogging him to claim the top ranking from Pete Sampras.

Agassi now meets fifth seeded compatriot Chang in Friday's semi-final.

Becker rated his straight sets demolition of 21-year-old



Jim Courier of the U.S. (left) congratulates quarter-final match at the Australian Open in compatriot Andre Agassi after their five set Melbourne (Reuters photo)

what makes the difference between the greatest players and a good player, there's no question Boris is a great player."

Woodforde, who finished the match with Enqvist flat on his back at the realisation of his achievement, said it was a sweet feeling.

"It's quite incredible, words can't describe it and it's so exceptional that this is all in my own backyard."

Huber knocks out Martinez

Germany's Anke Huber ended the Spanish challenge in the women's section of the Australian Open on Wednesday, knocking out number two seed Conchita Martinez in three sets to go into only her second Grand Slam semi-final.

The 21-year-old ninth-ranked Huber came back from a set down to beat Martinez 4-6, 6-2, 6-1 in one hour 44 minutes in a match disrupted by rain in the middle of the second set.

Martinez, a semifinalist in the last four Grand Slam events, bows out with compatriot and third seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, who was beaten on Tuesday in an ex-

traordinary marathon against U.S. teenager Chanda Rubin which went to 16-14 in the final set.

In an error-riddled match, Martinez held her game together more than a wayward Huber in the first set but then fell behind 3-1 in the second when the heavens

opened on the Flinders Park centre court and play was stopped.

When the match restarted about 45 minutes later under lights and with the sliding roof in place, Martinez slipped heavily with the score at 4-2, grazing the knuckles on her right hand and slightly injuring an ankle.

She went on to lose the set 6-2, and with her forehead obviously suffering fell behind 3-0 in the decider, losing 11 straight points with a succession of drives landing well over the baseline.

The injury was treated but Huber, scenting victory, took the ball earlier and with her forehand at last finding its range and direction, kept up the momentum to break for a third time to take the match at 6-1.

Martinez' defeat means that Spain will be unrepresented in the women's singles semifinals for the first time since 1990. Rubin, the conqueror of Sanchez Vicario, now plays number one seed Monica Seles on Thursday for a place in the finals.

The eighth-seeded Huber said she sensed that Martinez had lost her concentration after the fall but also recognised the advantage of playing indoors after the break for rain.



Anke Huber of Germany celebrates after winning her quarter-final match against Spain's Conchita Martinez at the Australian Open on Tuesday (Reuters photo)

Cameroon, Angola out of African Nations' Cup

DURBAN (AFP) — Cameroon and Angola will now pack their bags and go home after their 3-3 draw here on Wednesday meant both sides were eliminated from the African Nations Cup.

Francois Omam-Biyik, 1990 World Cup veteran, scored with a header in the 26th minute, before Joni equalised with a 39th minute penalty for the sides to go in one apiece at the break.

Pauloane and Quinzinho put Angola 3-1 ahead before two late goals by Georges Mouyeme and an injury time own goal by Helder meant the sides drew 3-3.

The result meant South Africa qualify along with Egypt, who beat the hosts 1-0 at the FNB stadium in Johannesburg on Wednesday.

Cameroon dominated the early stages and deservedly went ahead when Omam-Biyik rose to a cross from Marc Foe on the right to head past goalkeeper Antonio Orlando.

Angola equalised from the spot through Joni, after Pauloane was brought down in the box by Cameroon goalkeeper Boukar Alioum.

The crowd of 3,000, predominantly school children, who were let in free, were treated to a goal feast in the second half.

Angola took the lead in the 54th minute through Alves who drove a fierce left footer from 25 yards past Alioum.

Angola went further ahead in the 78th minute when Novo Wilson raced through a huge gap in the Cameroon defence and passed to the unmarked Quinzinho who side-footed home.

Cameroon staged a late revival after bringing on their full quota of three substitutes. They reduced the deficit in the 80th minute at a free-kick when Georges Mouyeme rounded his marker to fire past Orlando.

Cameroon forced the draw in the 92nd minute when Biyik headed goalwards and defender Jesus Helder could only help the ball on its way into the net with a back-header.

Soares warns bigger nations: Gabon coach Alain da Costa Soares, whose team have been the surprise package of the tournament and have already qualified for the semi-finals, warned bigger nations should not underestimate them.

If Gabon win Group C, they would stay in Durban and play the runners-up of Group D, probably Ivory Coast or Tunisia, on Jan. 28.

Soares had admitted soon after the team's arrival in Durban that most of his players could be classified as amateurs and only handful of the 22-man squad had experience of playing in Europe.

"But," he warned, "this fact in itself should not be sufficient reason for team's with more professional players in their ranks to be rates above us."



Switzerland's Martina Hingis shows her disappointment as she loses to S. Africa's Amanda Coetzer (Reuters photo)

THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF & WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST IS RECRUITING AT ITS HEADQUARTERS IN AMMAN: EDUCATIONAL PLANNING OFFICER, GRADE 17. (VN#HQ (A) 08/96) FIXED TERM THREE YEARS. (Re-Advertisement)

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WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HERSCH
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USE THE ENTRY WISELY

Both vulnerable, South deals.

NORTH
A J 5 2
Q 8 5
A K 3
Q 9 8 7 6

WEST
A K 10 8 4
Q 2
Q J 10 9
A 10 5 4 2

EAST
A 9 7 6 5
Q K 4 3
Q 8 5 2
A A E J

SOUTH
A A Q
A Q J 10 9 8 7
Q K 7 6
A 3

The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10th. The problem is that you have only one entry to dummy, so you have to put it to good use.

The worst of all is to win the set of diamonds and take a trump finesse. Barring a singleton king, which assumes the contract no matter what you do, this line works only if the king of trumps is with East and the suit breaks 2-2, which is against the odds.

Somewhat better is to use your entry to take the spade finesse. That works whenever East holds the spade king, and that will occur 50 percent of the time.

But the best line of all is to take advantage of dummy's jack of spades. Win the opening lead in hand and hang down the ace and queen of spades. Now you can win West's diamond continuation on the table and cash the jack of spades for the fulfilling trick, discarding a loser from hand. That line fails only if spades break worse than 3-3 or diamonds are 6-1, which is considerably against the odds. Did you spot the winning play?

The auction is straightforward. Once North shows even minimum values, South wants to be in a heart game, and the direct route is the best way to get there.

West leads the queen of diamonds. You can see nine tricks, and there are several ways to try for a

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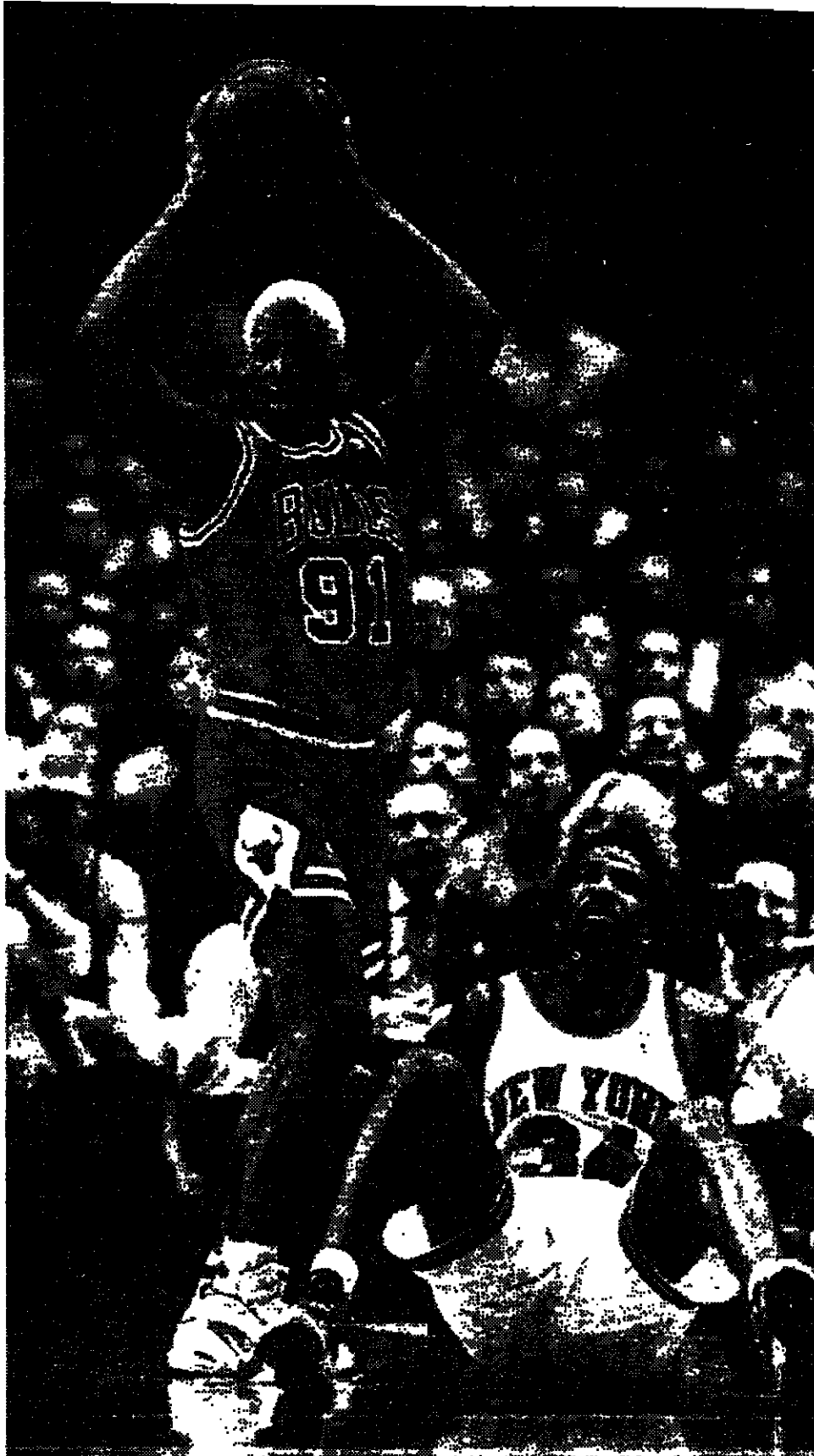
CONCORD "1"
* ACE VENTURA "2"
CONCORD "2"
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Chicago Bulls forward Dennis Rodman looks to pass after grabbing a rebound from New York Knicks forward Charles Oakley (right) in the second period of their NBA game Monday at New York's Madison Square Garden (Reuters photo)

Miller scores 40 points as Pacers scorch Suns

INDIANAPOLIS (R) — Reggie Miller was hot, hot, hot.

The Indiana sharpshooter scored a season-high 40 points playing just 2½ quarters as the Pacers built a 31-point lead and coasted to a 117-102 win over the Phoenix Suns on Tuesday.

"Reggie was on fire and I think a lot of guys had good nights," Pacers coach Larry Brown said.

Dale Davis had 16 points and 11 rebounds and Antonio Davis added 16 and 10 for the Pacers, who won their 13th straight home game despite the absence of centre Rik Smits (sore foot).

Charles Barkley had 20 points and 15 rebounds and Kevin Johnson added 17 points for the Suns, who have lost five of their last six and are 1-3 under new coach Cotton Fitzsimmons.

"They kicked us from one end of the building to another," said Fitzsimmons. "Reggie had a great game."

Miller was 12-of-16 from the field, including 6-of-8 from three-point range.

"We played well tonight," said Miller. "We are getting better and better each game."

Indiana opened its largest lead at 88-57 on a three-pointer by Mark Jackson with 4:26 remaining.

"When you have a guy as hot as Reggie was tonight you get the ball in his hands and you play off of him," said Jackson, who had nine assists.

In Cleveland, the Atlanta Hawks got 23 points and 10 assists from Mookie Blaylock and held the Cavaliers to just 11 points in the fourth quarter en route to their ninth straight victory 84-72.

Steve Smith added 20 points for Atlanta, which trailed 44-35 at the half and 61-59 after three quarters but limited the Cavaliers to 3-for-20 shooting in the final period.

The Hawks are on their longest win streak since taking 14 in a row during the 1993-94 season.

Cleveland, which had a four-game home win streak halted, got 17 points each from Danny Ferry and Terrell Brandon.

In Sacramento, Jason Kidd capped his eighth career triple-double by sinking two

free throws with 29 seconds left to lift the Dallas Mavericks past the Kings 111-109.

Kidd, who totalled 29 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists, scored the Mavericks' last five points, all on free throws.

Mitch Richmond scored 36 points and Brian Grant added a season-high 24 and 16 rebounds for Sacramento, which had a six-game home winning streak snapped.

In New York, Michael Jordan scored 33 points and Scottie Pippen added 19 as the Chicago Bulls won their 12th straight, 99-79 over the Knicks, to improve to a league-best 35-3.

Luc Longley had 14 points and 10 rebounds for Chicago, which can tie the 1971-72 Los Angeles Lakers for the best three-loss start (39-3) by winning its next four games.

Chicago outrebounded New York 48-33 and scored 29 points off 25 turnovers.

In Orlando, Shaquille O'Neal scored 20 points and Dennis Scott added 19 as the Magic won their 38th straight home game, 105-90 over the Philadelphia 76ers.

Nick Anderson scored 17 points and Penny Hardaway added 16 and eight assists for Orlando, which remained unbeaten in 21 home games this

season and extended its home winning streak to 43 games over Eastern Conference opponents.

Trevor Ruffin scored 23 points, Vernon Maxwell added 19 and Lasalle Thompson grabbed 18 rebounds — 10 offensive — for Philadelphia, which plummeted to its sixth straight loss and a 7-31 record, worst in the NBA.

In Toronto, Tracy Murray scored 16 points and Damon Stoudamire added 11 and 11 assists as the expansion Raptors beat the New Jersey Nets 86-79 for their second straight win.

The Raptors held the Nets to 31 points in the second half. Alvin Robertson recorded a franchise-record seven steals as the Raptors forced 27 turnovers.

New Jersey welcomed guard Kendall Gill, acquired in a trade for Kenny Anderson, but lost forward Ed O'Bannon to a shoulder injury. Gill scored 11 points on 4-of-12 shooting in 37 minutes, mostly filling in for O'Bannon.

Shawn Bradley scored 20 points to lead the Nets, who were without forward Jayson Williams, who did not travel due to a stomach virus.

NBA RESULTS

Toronto	86	New Jersey	79
Atlanta	84	Cleveland	72
Indiana	117	Phoenix	102
Orlando	105	Philadelphia	90
Chicago	99	New York	79
Utah	96	Portland	72
Dallas	111	Sacramento	109

EMBASSY OF INDIA

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Friday, 26th January 1996

All Indians and persons of Indian origin and their families are cordially invited to participate in a function and Open House to commemorate the Republic Day of India.

Time: 6:30 p.m. in the evening
(In view of Ramadan)

Date: Friday, 26th January 1996

Place: Indian Embassy premises, 1st Circle, Jabal Amman, behind Mahas Hospital.

Premier League's 19th week kicks off today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — As the 19th week of the Premier League Soccer Championship kicks off Thursday teams will be looking to score victories after standings remained totally unchanged after the latest matches.

With only four weeks remaining in the competition Al Ramtha are still in the lead but are followed closely by titleholders Al Wihdat.

Al Ramtha now have 40 points after their 3-0 win over last placed Al Russeifa who have lost all their matches so far and have no points in the standings. They also have the worst scoring record at 15-73.

Al Ramtha's upcoming opponents will be Al Ahli who are now well outside the relegation zone following their two consecutive victories. Al Ahli last beat Al Jazireh to improve their overall points to 25 although remaining in 8th place.

Titleholders Al Wihdat overcame Sahab 2-1 to remain in second place. Al Wihdat will next face 5th placed Al Qadissieh while Sahab play Al Jalil.

Former champs Al Faisali remained third and improved their scoring record after a 6-0 drubbing of Al Jalil.

Kufroum continued their impressive results beating Al Baqaa 3-2 to remain in 4th place only one point behind Al Faisali.

Al Qadissieh remained fifth after they held Al Hussein to a goalless draw. Al Hussein thus remained sixth and will meet Kufroum Friday.

Schedule of 19th week

Thursday 25/1	Faisali-Jazireh
Thursday 25/1	Russeifa-Baqaa
Friday 26/1	Sahab-Jalil
Friday 26/1	Wihdat-Qadissieh
Friday 26/1	Hussein-Kufroum
Saturday 27/1	Ahli-Ramtha

STANDINGS AFTER 18TH WEEK

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Ramtha	18	12	4	2	29	6	40
Wihdat	18	11	5	2	33	16	38
Faisali	18	10	5	3	32	12	35
Kufroum	18	9	7	2	27	16	34
Qadissieh	18	9	4	5	27	16	31
Hussein	18	7	6	5	31	16	27
Jazireh	18	7	5	6	33	24	26
Ahli	18	6	7	5	26	20	25
Baqaa	18	5	3	10	24	42	18
Sahab	18	2	8	8	14	26	14
Jalil	18	2	2	14	20	50	8
Russeifa	18	-	-	18	15	73	-

Walsh returns to 49ers as assistant coach

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — Bill Walsh, who guided the San Francisco 49ers to three Super Bowl titles, is rejoining the team as an assistant head coach, the NFL club announced Tuesday.

Walsh will assist with the 49ers' offence, a system which he constructed in leading the team to three NFL titles in 10 seasons. Marc Treisman will remain as offensive coordinator under head coach George Seifert.

The re-hiring of Walsh continues a coaching shake-up of the 49ers, who won last year's Super Bowl but lost in the second round of this year's playoffs to the Green Bay Packers.

The 49ers added a quarterback coach Monday with the hiring of Matt Cavanaugh, who was a backup for the Niners under Joe Montana from 1983 to 1985.

Walsh said his return was not a threat to Seifert.

"I think I have a good deal of knowledge, wisdom and expertise, which is a resource. This is done in the corporate world all the time," Walsh said.

"I'm part of an overall resource system that will try to field the best possible team. I'm just a player in this mechanism. I hope it's an active, energetic position, but not a decision-making role. I'm working for George now."

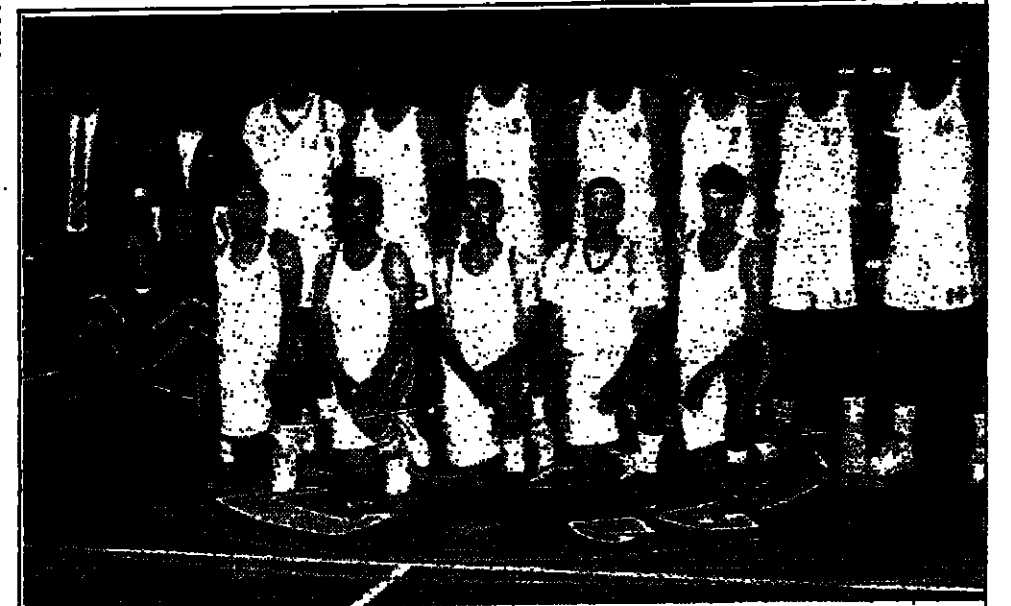
"The position as I understand it is to be a resource, to help different people. This is sort of an emeritus position."

Walsh led San Francisco to championships in Super Bowls 16, 19, and 23 before he resigned as head coach in 1988 following the club's 20-16 victory over the Cincinnati Bengals in Super Bowl 23.

Walsh took over the Niners in 1979 and posted a 102-63-1 mark in his 10 seasons as head coach.

Walsh became a broadcaster for NBC for three years before returning to Stanford University as head coach in 1992. He went 17-17-1 in three years.

Walsh said his friendship with Seifert and his close relationship with 49ers owner Ed DeBevoise and club president Carmen Policy played a key role in his decision to return.



Al Ahli's team — will they be able to keep their title hopes alive

First Division Basketball Championship 1st round concludes today with Ahli-Orthodox clash

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The traditional match of the season between all-time rivals Al Ahli and Al Orthodoxi awaits basketball fans Thursday night at the Sports Palace.

With no agreement reached between the Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) and Jordan Television on live coverage, thousands of fans are expected to attend the first round final.

Despite the decade-long popularity of the clash of the Kingdom's usual top two teams, this year is quite different after Al Jazireh recently scored a 76-73 upset of titleholders Al Ahli and entered the race for the title.

If Al Jazireh maintain their form, the fight for the Kingdom's basketball title will no longer be limited to the two teams who have dominated the game for decades.

Al Jazireh had given Al Orthodoxi a hard time before losing 72-66 proving that the team was no longer content with third place. Therefore, Al Jazireh's results against both teams in the second round will be crucial in determining the winner.

Al Ahli's defeat to Al Jazireh brightened Al Orthodoxi's prospects leaving fans stunned and officials happy at the fact that a third team was now seriously challenging the crown.

Al Ahli had not lost a match since 1991, boasted a mighty lineup and challenged any team to beat them in the next five years.

In fact, over the decades Al Ahli had only lost to Al Orthodoxi whenever they were defeated as both teams have maintained an unrivalled dominance over the game for as long as fans can remember.

Prior to their match against Al Orthodoxi news from Al Ahli's camp had it that the team and officials had somewhat overcome the snags that resulted in their unexpected defeat following which Al Ahli had contemplated relieving Ukrainian coach Sasha of his duties.

However that does not seem to be the case at the moment and Al Ahli are expected to live up to their fans' expectations.

Although missing the efforts of centre Naser Bushnaq, Al Ahli now have a coherent lineup headed by veterans Marwan Ma'touq and Yousef Zaghouli. Ma'touq saved his team against Al Jazireh netting 26 points including 7 three-pointers. Teammates include Faisal Nsour, Mohammad Shammil, Marwan Saeedi, Ramez Hammoudh who have been

training under their Ukrainian coach for the past five seasons.

Sasha had enabled Al Ahli to clinch the crown in 1990 ending Al Orthodoxi's dominance of the game from 1976-1989. Al Orthodoxi took back the title in 1991 but Al Ahli came back to win in 92, 93, 94. (The competition currently underway is for the 1995 season).

Al Orthodoxi also have not put their fans' mind to rest, after failing to score big wins expected after their long training camp during which they hosted and beat top teams from Iraq and Syria.

They are led by veteran Hilal Barakat, accompanied by younger teammates Muntaser Abulayyeb, and a new lineup of promising young players like Mahmoud Shaban and Fadi Saqqa who represented Jordan in the World Youth Championship.

Al Orthodoxi now lead the standings and a win Thursday would undoubtedly boost their chances for reclaiming the title.

Al Ahli-Orthodoxi match will be held at 8:30 p.m. and will be preceded by Al Watani-Jazireh match.

STANDINGS

	P	W	L	SG	SA	PTS
Orthodoxi	3	3	-	285	181	6
Ahli	3	2	1	270	171	5
Jazireh	3	2	1	202	185	5
Jalil	4	1	3	228	273	5
Watani	3	-	3	163	338	3

Bernardini close to Monte Carlo triumph

MONTE CARLO (R) — Surprise leader Patrick Bernardini of France kept his cool and moved close to his first victory in the Monte Carlo Rally on Wednesday.

After the two last timed stages before the traditional night finale, Bernardini in a Ford Escort enjoyed a comfortable lead of three minutes and 29 seconds over compatriot Francois Delcourt in a Peugeot 306.

Pre-race favourite Armin Schwarz, who has been slowed down by transmission failure on his Toyota Celica since the race started on Monday, was third 4:56 back and with little hope of a triumph when the winter classic ends on Thursday.

Schwarz kept fighting to clock the fastest time in the day's first timed stage, a 15-kilometre sprint from Clumanc to Lambruisse which

cost Bernardini 12 seconds.

But Bernardini was back in control with the best time in the next section over 16 kilometres from Loda to Lucern which saw Schwarz lose 1:12.

"It's the transmission again," said the German.

"All we can do now is keep the pressure up, drive as fast as we can and see what happens."

BRITISH EMBASSY ANNUAL NOTICE TO ALL BRITISH CITIZENS LIVING IN JORDAN

Have you registered with the British Embassy? If you are a British citizen and live in Jordan, please contact the British Embassy, Consular Section, in order to obtain a registration form.

If you have registered during 1995, please confirm your continuing presence in Jordan by re-registering as soon as possible. Please also notify the Consular Section about any changes of address and/or telephone number. Such confirmation is in the interest of all British nationals in Jordan.

If names are not re-registered within three months the Embassy will be obliged to consider that those concerned have left the country. The names will accordingly be deleted from the register.

If you are a citizen of a Commonwealth country which does not have an Embassy or Consular in Jordan, Please ask the British Embassy, Consular Section, about registration formalities.

The British Embassy is located in Abdoun, near the Orthodox Club, Telephone 823100. The Post Office Box Number is 87.
The consulate is open from Sunday to Thursday 08:30 - 12:00 hours.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel plans tough new gun control rules

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli army has ordered settlers and other civilians holding military-issue weapons to return the arms ahead of strict new gun control rules to come into effect in March, officials said Wednesday. The officials said all civilians holding army-distributed guns in Israel and the Palestinian territories must return them and undergo physical and psychological tests to determine their fitness to bear arms. They said the procedure should take several weeks. The crackdown was ordered on the recommendation of an official commission set up to investigate the February 1994 massacre by a Jewish settler of Muslim worshippers in the West Bank town of Hebron. The settler, Baruch Goldstein, used an M-16 issued to him by the army for self-defence. In another development, Interior Minister Haim Ramon announced that gun permits issued to civilians would be valid for only three years instead of five. To obtain the permit, applicants will have to take shooting tests and present a medical certificate showing they are in good physical and mental health, have no criminal record and underwent military service. Some 250,000 civilians currently hold gun permits.

Michael plans controversial Tehran trip

BONN (R) — German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, pursuing a controversial policy known as "critical dialogue" with Tehran, plans to visit Iran, his ministry said. A ministry spokeswoman said the exact date and programme had still to be agreed. Mr. Kinkel's policy of pursuing close German ties with Iran is viewed with suspicion in Washington and has also been bitterly opposed at home. His plans for an Islamic conference were left in tatters last November when the German parliament voted to exclude Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, after Tehran praised the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The rare defeat for the government prompted Mr. Kinkel to postpone the conference.

Afghan opposition rejects truce offer

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — The Afghan opposition has rejected an offer put forward by President Burhanuddin Rabbani to halt fighting in Afghanistan during Ramadan. Cited by the Pakistani news agency APP, a spokesman for the Taliban student militia said: "The Taliban could not trust the words and deeds of Rabbani. The offer is aimed at just buying time." A representative for Hezb-e-Islami, led by fundamentalist chief Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, added: "Anything from the illegitimate government of Rabbani is unacceptable to us and the people of Afghanistan." A third opposition group, led by Uzbek chief Rashid Dostum, which controls several provinces in northern Afghanistan, also dismissed the truce proposal.

Rabin's killer quizzed girlfriends on massacre

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The assassin of Yitzhak Rabin would ask new girlfriends if they approved of the massacre of 29 civilians at prayer by Jewish settler nearly two years ago, the daily Yediot Aharonot reported. "Before taking up with a young woman I first ask her what she thinks of Baruch Goldstein, who I admired a lot," said Yigal Amir, during a lie detector test following his arrest, the paper said. He would cease all contact if the woman failed to show the same admiration for Goldstein, a Jewish settler, who gunned down at least 30 Muslims in a Hebron mosque in February 1994. "According to her reply I knew if I was dealing with someone superficial or deep. What counts for me is ideology," he added. He said he found women who "more contact lenses or any other kind of artifice" transparent.

Arafat, Beilin to visit Stockholm

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and the Israeli minister in charge of the Middle East peace process, Yossi Beilin, will visit Stockholm early next week, the foreign ministry said on Wednesday. Mr. Arafat will attend a prize ceremony on Jan. 30 where Palestinian and Israeli youth organisations will receive the Olof Palme Memorial Fund's annual award for their peace efforts. It is not yet known how long Mr. Arafat will stay in Sweden, his ministry spokesman Helena Bothorp told AFP the visit would last "a few days." During his stay, Mr. Arafat will meet with Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson and Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm-Wallen. Talks are expected to focus on the situation in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. The ministry provided no details of Mr. Beilin's visit to Stockholm, but according to Swedish news agency TT, the Israeli politician is expected to meet with Swedish Foreign Minister Jan Nygren. Olof Palme was Swedish prime minister in 1969-1976 and 1982-1986. He was gunned down in Stockholm on Feb. 28, 1986.

Protesters protest presence of 'collaborators'

LORE (AFP) — This small Mediterranean port went on strike Wednesday to protest a government relocation programme that has installed 40 Palestinian "collaborators" and their families in the town. "This strike is aimed at protesting against the defence ministry policy of forcing us to take in the families of Palestinian collaborators," Deputy Mayor Aharon Lahiani said. He said the town's schools had been closed Wednesday as an initial protest, and the defence ministry doesn't change its policy, we'll shut the whole town," he threatened. "We already have 10 collaborators' families and that's too many." The defence ministry has relocated hundreds of Palestinians who collaborated with Israeli occupation forces in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since the former collaborators fled death threats. Mr. Lahiani said the presence of the Palestinians "threatens to create tensions between Acre's Jewish and Israeli Arab residents and to undermine the peaceful coexistence we have enjoyed." About 10,000 of Acre's 50,000 inhabitants are Arabs and the rest Jews.

Israel issues passport for jailed spy Pollard

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli interior ministry granted citizenship to Jonathan Pollard and issued him a passport, the ministry said Wednesday in the latest move to gain the release of the American Jew serving a life prison term for spying for Israel. Interior Minister Haim Ramon personally signed the passport for Mr. Pollard, a U.S. Navy analyst arrested in November 1985 and convicted of treason in March 1987 for passing military secrets to the Jewish state. "We are doing everything possible to gain the freedom of Jonathan Pollard," Mr. Ramon said as he handed the certificate of citizenship and passport to Mr. Pollard's wife Esther and lawyers representing the jailed American.

Nobel attacker says he is sorry

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — A man involved in an attack on Nobel laureate Ingvar Mahfouz said Tuesday he was sorry and wanted to be the prize-winning author, police said. Amir Muhammad Ibrahim, 25, was accused of providing the knife to the attacker and was sentenced to life imprisonment for his role in the October 1994 attack, when Mr. Mahfouz was stabbed in the neck. Two others were sentenced to death and 11 were given sentences of hard labour for three years to life. Since the attack Mr. Mahfouz, 84, has been unable to write and has been left paralysed. Mr. Ibrahim said he "repented and regretted his regret in having taken part in the attack. He said he apologised to Naguib Mahfouz," a police spokesman said. Mr. Mahfouz was accused of blasphemy by Muslims for many of his writings, especially those in the 1950s.

Ciller's coalition campaign collapses

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey's month-long political crisis escalated Wednesday when moves to form a conservative coalition government that would bar the way to a pro-Islamic party collapsed.

Motherland Party leader Mesut Yilmaz torpedoed the latest talks when he said his group would not take part in a coalition led by caretaker Prime Minister Tansu Ciller. "We have decided not to be a part of a government led by a prime minister who has brought Turkey to a very unpleasant situation today," Mr. Yilmaz told a news conference.

Ms. Ciller has been Turkish premier since June 1993, the first woman in Turkey ever in the post, but she lost her grip on power in elections late December which were won by the pro-Islamic Welfare Party.

Welfare fell short of an overall majority, however, and has been unable to find a coalition partner because of its opposition to closer Turkish ties with Europe and its support for a stronger adherence to Islamic codes.

Ms. Ciller then suggested that she and Mr. Yilmaz agree to a coalition which involved them rotating the premiership, an arrangement which worked in Israel during the 1980s, but insisted that she have first crack at the whip.

Mr. Yilmaz appeared to leave the door open to joining a coalition with True Path under a different leadership. "If we set up a coalition with the True Path Party, it will be only under someone else's premiership," he said.

Ms. Ciller on Wednesday insisted on her premiership. "My True Path has more seats than the Motherland in parliament, so it is only natural that the True Path holds the premiership during the first period of a rotating premiership," she said.

Mr. Yilmaz holds Ms. Ciller personally responsible for Turkey's many problems, particularly in the economy, including an annual inflation rate of 80 per cent (for 1993), high unemployment and foreign debts totalling \$73 billion. Ms. Ciller accused Mr. Yilmaz of preparing to form a government with the Welfare Party rather than her own centre-right party.

"There are indications of preparations for a Motherland-Welfare government, if they are determined to do so, there is nothing we can do," she said.

Mr. Yilmaz, in his reply, reaffirmed that he would be involved in talks with Welfare leader Necmettin Erbakan if other options for a government failed.

"If Ciller wants to evade the Welfare's presence in a government, she should give up her dreams to become prime minister once more and agree to the premiership of another person to lead a Motherland-True Path government," he said.

"Or she should just support a Motherland minority government from outside," he added.

Analysts believe that as both Mr. Yilmaz and Ms. Ciller appear irreconcilable on the premiership issue, the chances of their forming a coalition that would exclude Welfare from the cabinet are dwindling.

Mr. Yilmaz and Ms. Ciller had been involved in a bitter personal feud which peaked during the election campaign when they exchanged harsh accusations ranging from incompetence to corruption.

Since the election there has been strong pressure on both leaders from several groups, notably the business community and, according to some observers, the country's influential military, to join hands in barring the way to a government involving Welfare.

"The two leaders don't trust each other at all," commented Yavuz Donat, leading political analyst writing for the Istanbul-based daily Milliyet.

"They both fear that if he or she agrees to the premiership of the other in the initial two-and-a-half year period of rotating premiership, the one holding the post will betray the other at some point."

All parties fell well short of an absolute majority in the 450-seat parliament.



RENEWED HOPES: Iraqi women buy foodstuff in a Baghdad market on Wednesday. The Iraqi dinar continued a spectacular recovery in the market, trading at 1,000 dinars to the dollar on Wednesday as opposed to 2,650 last week following reports that the government was moving towards accepting a deal with the United States under which the country would export a limited quantity of oil to raise funds to pay for food and medicine imports (see story on page one) (AFP photo)

Majali: Self-rule elections free and fair

AMMAN (Petra) — Palestinian general elections held last week were fair and free and the Palestinian people voted with great zeal and enthusiasm that reflected their national unity and determination to attain their national aspirations, according to Dr. Abdul Salam Majali, head of the Jordanian team of observers that monitored the elections.

Addressing a press conference at the World Affairs Council on Wednesday one

day after his return to Amman from the West Bank, Dr. Majali said that the Palestinian people displayed deep appreciation of His Majesty King Hussein and voiced their keenness on maintaining the strongest ties with the Jordanian people.

"The Jordanian team of observers were accorded great hospitality and respect at the official and popular levels and were overwhelmed by the strong and unique relations binding the Palesti-

nian and Jordanian people," said Dr. Majali.

Dr. Majali noted that despite some obstacles that impeded the process, especially in Jerusalem and Hebron, the voting went on smoothly.

He said the elections proved that the Palestinian people overwhelmingly support the peace process, and served as a reply to sceptics who had voiced misgivings and spread doubts about the process.

Dr. Majali said that Jordan

would continue to support and promote "this unique relationship with the Palestinian people," adding that the elections served as a first step towards the creation of the independent Palestinian state.

With reference to Jerusalem Dr. Majali said that this question will be tackled with "reason," adding that "Jerusalem is a political case which will be tackled in the final negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians."

Hawatmeh ready to go to Palestinian area

DAMASCUS (AFP) — The exiled head of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) said Wednesday he was ready to go to the Palestinian territories after Israel gave the green light.

"Our leaders and officers are ready to return to the territories," said Nayef Hawatmeh, whose opposition group is based in Syria.

Israel said Saturday that it would allow the 400 members of the Palestine National Council (PNC) who live in exile to return to the Palestinian territories for a meeting to scrap articles in their charter calling for the destruction of Israel.

Mr. Hawatmeh told AFP he was opposed to the condi-

tions Israel was imposing on their return.

"We reject the pressure that (Prime Minister) Shimon Peres wants to place on the Palestinian National Council," he said.

In his peace accords with Israel, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat pledged to amend the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) charter within two months of the inaugural session of the newly-elected legislative council.

The council is expected to hold its first meeting in later February.

But Mr. Hawatmeh, whose group is fiercely opposed to the Israeli-PLO autonomy accords, said Mr. Arafat's promises to Israel "are not

binding on the PNC," which alone has the power to amend the charter.

"Arafat signed the Oslo (autonomy) accord with the Israelis without obtaining the agreement of the PNC," he added.

The Israeli right-wing Likud Party condemned the government's authorisation of Mr. Hawatmeh's return, branding him a "dangerous terrorist."

But Mr. Peres said he was unconcerned. "He can return, but it doesn't matter to us whether he is in Gaza or Damascus, we have nothing to gain from him staying in Israel," the premier told Israeli radio.

The leader of another hardline group opposed to

the autonomy accords, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, has already refused Israel's offer to return.

George Habash said he would stay away from the Palestinian self-rules areas "so long as four and half million Palestinians remain in exile."

Former PNC Speaker Sheikh Abdul Hamid Al Sayeh said Wednesday he wanted "written approval from the Israeli government" before he decided whether to take up the offer to return. The cleric has been based in Amman since 1967.

The PNC has 630 members and groups all the PLO's factions including Mr. Arafat's Fateh movement, the DFLP and the PFLP.

Pakistan plans ties with rebel-held Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistan has announced plans to establish economic and communications links with rebel-held regions in Afghanistan, ignoring protests from the embattled government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

A Pakistani team has already left for these regions to study projects such as repairing war-damaged roads, laying a railway line and setting up banks with the eventual aim of opening the land route to Central Asia, the state television said.

The Afghan Foreign Ministry issued a statement last Thursday protesting at what it called a visit by 10 Pakistani

technicians to areas held by the opposition Taliban militia in southern and western Afghanistan without permission from Mr. Rabbani's government in Kabul.

It also protested against plans, reported by a Pakistani newspaper, for the state-run National Bank of Pakistan to open branches in those regions and called such moves interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

Pakistan's National Highway Authority will help repair the road that will provide a link with the former Soviet Central Asian states, the television said.

Experts will also examine the feasibility of a plan to lay

a rail line along that route, it said.

It said the Pakistani government would set up utility stores and bank branches in the southern Afghan town of Kandahar and Herat in the west.

Lahore in Pakistan will soon have direct telephone links with the Afghan towns of Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat, Kandahar and Ghazni, it said.

Afghanistan's telephone links with Pakistan have remained cut off since the guerrilla war against Soviet occupation in the 1980s and the domestic inter-city telephone system has also been destroyed by factional fighting.

Mazar-e-Sharif, capital of the northern province of Balkh, is the power base of anti-Rabbani warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum, and Herat, Kandahar and Ghazni, which are also centres of provinces with the same names, are controlled by the Taliban militia.

The Afghan government accuses Pakistan of helping the Taliban, whose forces are besieging Kabul, aiming to topple Mr. Rabbani and install a purist Islamic rule.

Pakistan denies the charge and says it has no favourites among the Afghan factions it backed during their war to oust the forces of former Soviet Union.

Syria, Israel resume talks

(Continued from page 1)

since the creation of Israel in 1948.

Mr. Barak said an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights was conditional on the "depth of peace" that can be negotiated with Syria.

"If we can get full normalisation, full open peace with open trade, open transportation, free flow of goods and people over the border, and if we get compliance, namely including Lebanon and other states, if we get into regional economic projects and if attention will be given to our security needs, then we would be able to consider what is the depth of withdrawal that we can afford," he said.

The return of military experts to the table, for the first time since talks broke down in June, was expected to widen discussion but it remained unclear whether any progress could be achieved

within the context of disagreements over the agenda.

U.S. military experts were also to attend. U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry recently confirmed a U.S. offer to send troops as a buffer force to the Golan Heights. Syria said Wednesday the new talks offered a "golden chance" for peace.

Head of the official Syrian News Agency (SANA) Faez Saegh described the talks as "a golden chance" and said the Syrian team was empowered to take decisions if the Israeli team responded to the Syrian demands.

"We hope that Mr. Barak's presence in Washington will provide the needed authorisation for the Israeli negotiating team to take important and decisive decisions. Regarding withdrawal to June 4, 1967 borderlines and South Lebanon and establishing a balanced security system," Mr. Saegh said.

Arafat, Peres disagree

(Continued from page 1)

has pledged to do in the autonomy agreements signed with Israel in September," Mr. Peres said Tuesday.

In the September pact, Mr. Arafat promised to amend the PLO charter within two months of the inaugural session of the new Palestinian legislative council, expected to be held in late February. A French-based press watchdog meanwhile joined a chorus of criticism of the PNA for intimidating Arabic media during the campaign which led to Mr. Arafat's election.

Reporters Sans Frontières (Reporters Without Borders) said independents and candidates opposed to Mr. Arafat and Fateh were largely denied access to Palestinian-run television and radio.

It said newspapers also imposed self-censorship on their coverage of the first Palesti-

nian elections.

The accusations echoed charges by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, the most prominent of 600 international monitors of Saturday's election.

Journalists worked in "a climate of intimidation and fear which is obvious through the way public media have covered the elections, and the written press also," said Thierry Gruveller, head of an RSF mission monitoring the campaign.

"This climate is much more obvious, of course, if you talk privately with editors... (one) told us very frankly that he did not cover the elections because it was the only way for him to be sure not to be arrested," Mr. Gruveller told a news conference.

No one from the PNA was immediately available for comment.

COLUMN

Police evict homeless in centre of Tokyo

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese police forcibly removed several hundred homeless people and sympathisers from an underground passageway in the heart of Tokyo's commercial centre Wednesday. About 250 police and 400 private company watchmen massed outside the passageway before dawn, confronting activists from non-governmental organisations and the homeless who had erected a barricade to keep them out. Protected with shields, police began their assault at 07:20 a.m. (2220 GMT Tuesday), as demonstrators hurled various missiles and turned fire extinguishers on them. Clashes followed and some police were slightly injured as they arrested several demonstrators and homeless people in Tokyo's Shinjuku district, the commercial heart of the Japanese capital. Police tried to avoid violence but had to resort to force to dislodge protesters and homeless who refused to budge shouting "out, police", "we will fight" and "stop the violence." The city authorities plan to build a moving walkway through the 100-metre underground passageway leading to the ultra-modern town hall. Hundreds of homeless people living in cardboard boxes have for several years made the passageway their home.

Rare species of animal captured alive in Laos

BANGKOK (R) — Conservationists in Laos have found a live specimen of an extremely rare and elusive deer-like animal, one of only seven species of mammal discovered this century, a Laotian official said Wednesday. The animal, known as a Vu Quang ox, was found in a mountainous forest in eastern Laos near the border with Vietnam, said Soukanta Vichit, director of the Department of the Environment. The species Pseudoryx nghetinhensis was first discovered in 1992 in a Vietnamese nature reserve which gave it its name. Mr. Soukanta, who has only seen a photograph of the animal, said he had been told it was a pregnant female, found by a hunter earlier this month. "We took it from the hunter but it was already in a bad situation, it was hurt by the hunter's dog," Mr. Soukanta told Reuters by telephone from Vietnam. "We will try to help it. International wildlife experts are now on their way to the area to see it," he said. Last April a young Vu Quang ox was found alive in Vietnam but died days later. The species resembles a shaggy brown, and white deer and is known locally as a Sao-La, or weaving spindle, after its horns.

Burns' manager denies comedian near death

LOS ANGELES (R) — George Burns' manager, Tuesday flatly denied a New York gossip columnist's report that the legendary comedian, who just turned 100, is too weak to eat and is near death. "He's doing as well as can be expected for a guy 100 years old," Irving Fein, who manages Burns' business affairs, told Los Angeles radio station KFWB. "He's the same as he's been for the last few weeks since he's had the flu." Mr. Fein had previously blamed Burns' bout of flu for his failure to attend his birthday celebrations last week. Burns turned 100 Saturday and Mr. Fein said he spent the day resting with his family at his Beverly Hills home.